FIRST COMICS
MAY $1.00
NO. 2
$1.25 CANADA
E-MAN
ALONE AGAINST... THE F-MEN!
Staton
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FIRST™ NOTES

I was thinking about writing up **First Comics'** New Year's Resolutions, but it's too much of a pain. I'm not psychologically prepared for it, as I'm just now planning on going to Bruce Patterson's Halloween party (where all the Chicago comics professionals are dressing up like Marv Wolfman) and I can't put my head into 1983 yet. Doing comics is sort of like having reverse jet lag.

JON SABLE WHATCHAMACALLIT

I've known Mike Grell for a real long time now, long before I started working inside the comics biz. I first came across his work in a little, short-lived Chicago weekly newspaper, where his two-page comic strip ultimately evolved into *The Warlord*, a comic Mike created, drew and (at least as of this writing) still scripts for DC Comics. A real nice guy who's put in so many appearances at the annual Chicago Comicon that they're thinking about naming the darn thing after him.

So it was natural that Mike became one of the very first people to become aware of **First Comics** – even in those top-secret days of the spring of 1981, I had to bounce ideas off of somebody. And Mike's response – once I told him the scope and organization of our company, was "Great! I'm going to do a monthly for you!"

"Fantastic, Mike, just fantastic," I replied. "Of course you can add 28 pages of script and art, plus a cover, to your schedule. As we all know, writing *Warlord*, and writing and drawing **Starslayer** and the *Tarzan* Sunday newspaper strip doesn't take any time whatsoever, and you can easily add the fifty hours a week to your schedule for a booklength monthly."

"No problem. Listen, I'm not going to do everything forever," Mike responds, conveniently forgetting he regards *Warlord* as his first born carried off by the gypsies. "And I've got this idea that is totally unlike anything I've ever done before – something I know a lot about, something I've always wanted to do. You see, it's about this costumed mercenary. . ."

"You mean, you used to be a costumed mercenary?" I'm nothing if not sarcastic.

"No, but I know a lot about it." Mike then proceeded to reacquaint me with his career in Vietnam. Look, Grell carries around an elephant gun in his boots and has a real hard time getting onto airplanes, so I know he has a background in weaponry. He's also pretty good with a sword – although his wife is better.

"Mike, why would a mercenary want to wear a costume?" I said, thinking I'd throw him.

"Well, you see, he no longer really fights for other countries. He sort of hires himself out as a bodyguard, fights urban terrorists, prevents presidential assassinations; you know, real life stuff."

I reluctantly agreed. It is all too real life, and I thought his concept was unique: a comic bo k relevant to the 1980's. Real life blood and guts comics – hitting the "it really can happen" approach square on the head.

"You see, the guy's name is **Jon Sable**, and he's a **freelance** tough guy." Mike was warming up into a selling pitch. "But everybody knows Jon Sable is this hotshot mercenary, so he adopts this secret identity – real late at night, when nobody's looking, **Jon Sable, Freelance** turns out all the lights, goes to his top secret room, turns on his typewriter, puts on his pseudonym and grinds out another best-selling children's book."

"Children's book?"

"Yeah," Mike continues matter-of-factly. "It's about these leprechauns that live in Central Park, but nobody knows they're really there, except for this drunk, you see, and because he's a drunk, nobody believes him."

Well, Grell's concept took him far – about 500 miles south, to the **First Comics** temporary offices. And we looked at his presentation. And we talked about it. And we made jokes about it.

And we bought it. Or at least rented it. In point of fact, the first comic **First Comics** committed itself to publishing was **Jon Sable, Freelance.**

Listen, everybody tells you their newest title is the most fantastic thing they've seen since Spider-Man. Fine.

But we really mean it.

Jon Sable, Freelance #1 premieres next month.

NEXT MONTH

Cumulus meets Xander the Unconquerable, and Chaos will never be the same (that's **Warp** #4). E-Man and Mauser meet Dark Albatross (that's **E-Man** #3). And the above-babbled guy makes his premiere.

Oh, yes. Happy New Year!

– Mike Gold

ALSO FIRST IN JANUARY:

WARP #3: "Chaos Ascendant!" – the third part of the play adaptation by Frank Brunner, Peter Gillis and Bruce Patterson. Cumulus really does to go hell, and then he returns to Earth. Some fun. Valaria prepares a strong dose of vengeance for Chaos. And part two of the Faceless Ones saga, " A Masque in the Hand!" by Jack C. Harris and Steve Ditko. **Warp** #3 is on sale right now!

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Mike Gold, Managing Editor
Joe Staton, Art Director
Rick Oliver, Associate Editor
Bruce Patterson, Production Coordinator

Richard Felber, Business Manager
Kathy Kotsivas, Office Manager

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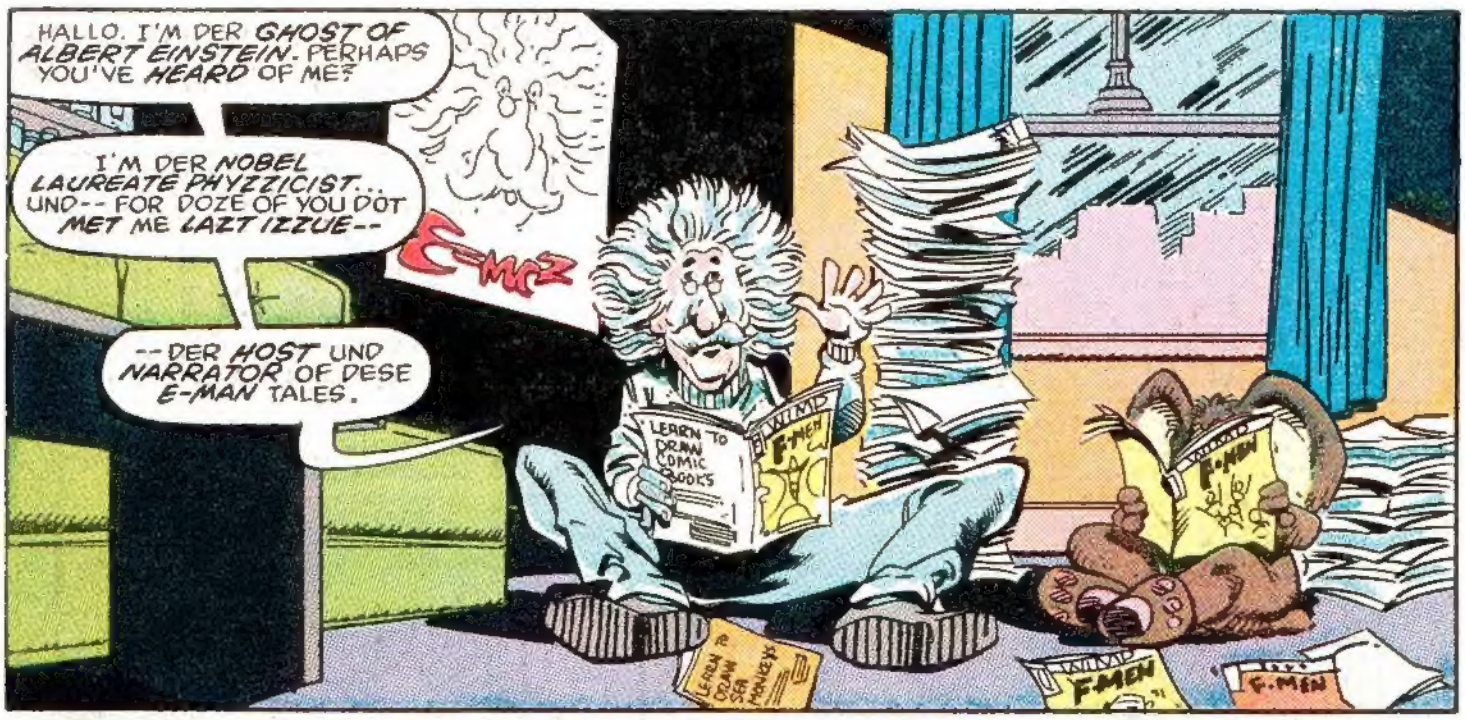
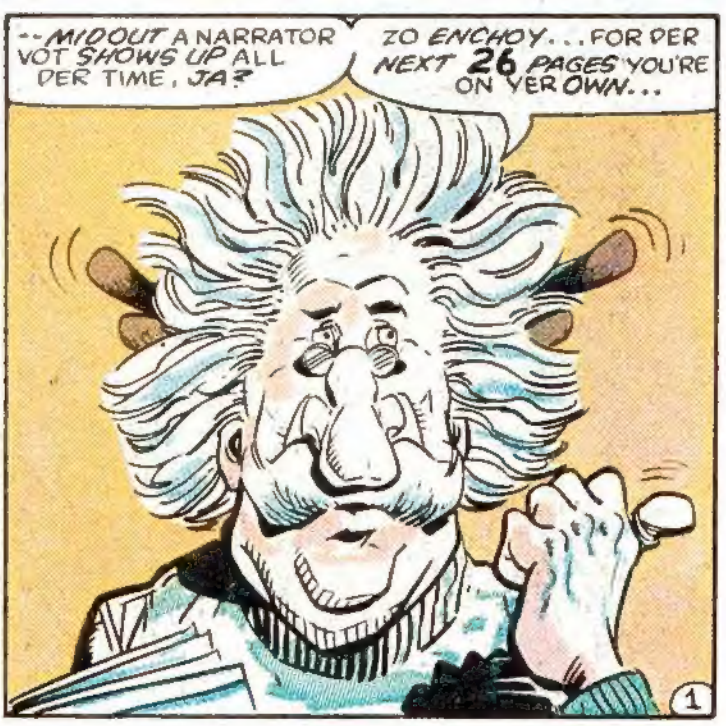

HALLO. I'M DER GHOST OF ALBERT EINSTEIN. PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD OF ME?
I'M DER NOBEL LAUREATE PHYZZICIST... UND-- FOR DOZE OF YOU DOT MET ME LAZT IZZUE--
--DER HOST UND NARRATOR OF DESE E-MAN TALES.
E=MC²
WIMP
F-MEN
LEARN TO DRAW COMIC GODS
F-MEN
F-MEN

DIS IS A COMICAL BOOK-- SPEZIFICALLY, A "UNHAPPY F-MEN" COMICAL BOOK.
AT DER MOMENT, DOT'S ALL DER F-MEN ARE-- COMICAL BOOK CHARACTERS.
?
WIMP
F-MEN
WIMP
F-MEN
PRINCETON
F-MEN

BUT DIS MONTH'S ADVENTURE IS A VERY SPEZIAL TALE...
... BECAUZE IN IT, DER F-MEN BECOME REAL PEOPLE-- UND DOT'S VHEN DER TROUBLE STARTS FOR E-MAN UND NOVA.
F-MEN

ZO... SINCE DIS MONTH'S E-MAN STORY HAS VOT YOU MIGHT CALL A "COMICAL BOOK MOTIF"...
... MAYBE I LET DIS STORY BE TOLD IN A STYLE MORE LIKE A COMICAL BOOK--
F-MEN
Towerville


--MIDOUT A NARRATOR VOT SHOWS UP ALL DER TIME, JA?
ZO ENCHOY... FOR DER NEXT 26 PAGES YOU'RE ON YER OWN...
1

When alien energy-being ***Alec Tronn*** dons his orange and yellow fighting togs, he becomes the world's most physically-impossible super-hero!

RICK OBADIAH PRESENTS:

THE PREPOSTEROUS E-MAN!™

CREATED BY: NICOLA CUTI & JOE STATON

MARTIN PASKO plotter & writer | JOE STATON artist | FAY LOUIE letterer | WENDY FIORE colorist | RICK OLIVER associate editor | MIKE GOLD editor

'F' as in Freak!

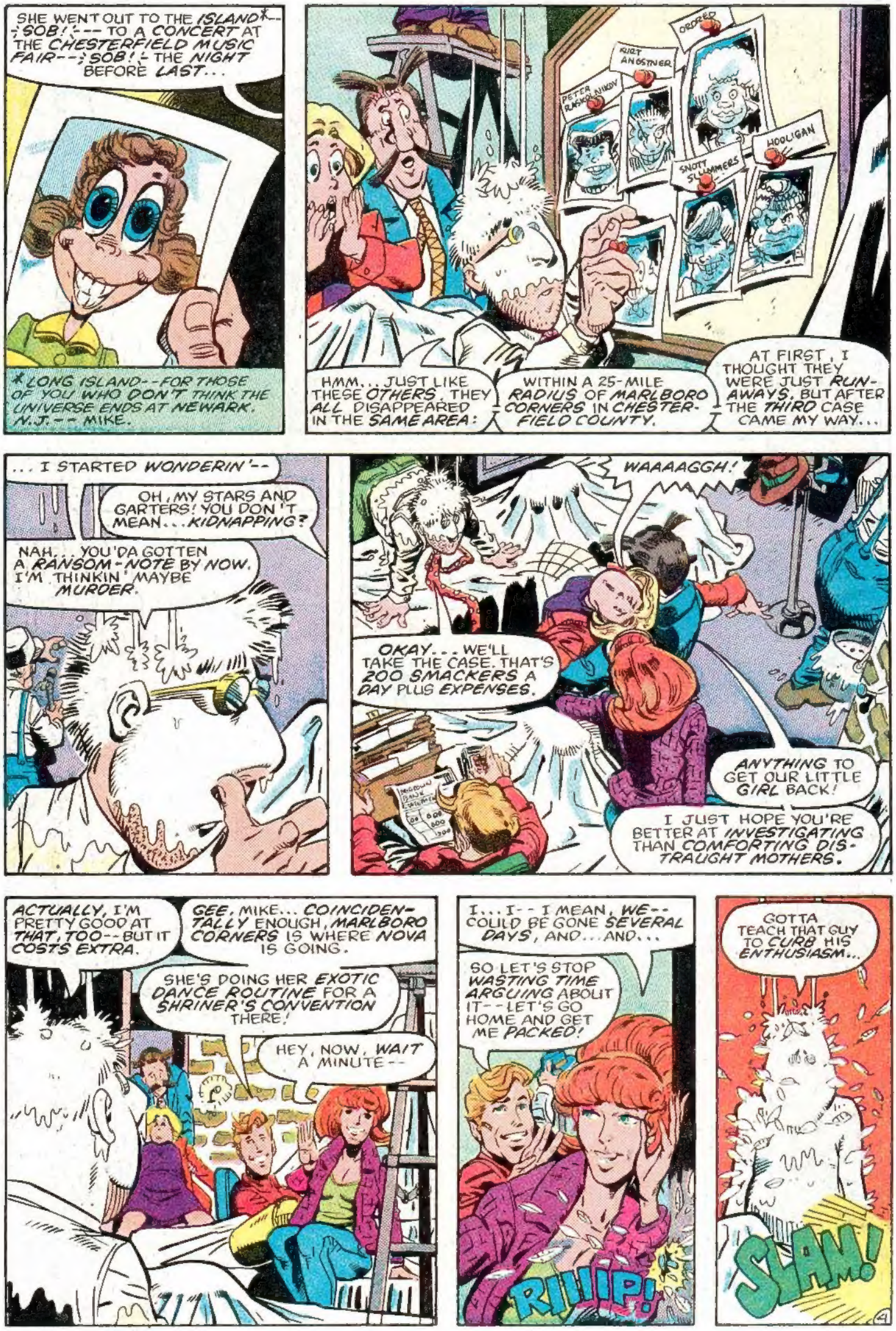
HIS NAME IS ALEC TRONN. HE'S AN ENERGY-BEING WITH THE ABILITY TO TURN HIMSELF FROM ENERGY INTO MATTER AND VICE-VERSA . . . AND TO ASSUME ANY SHAPE!

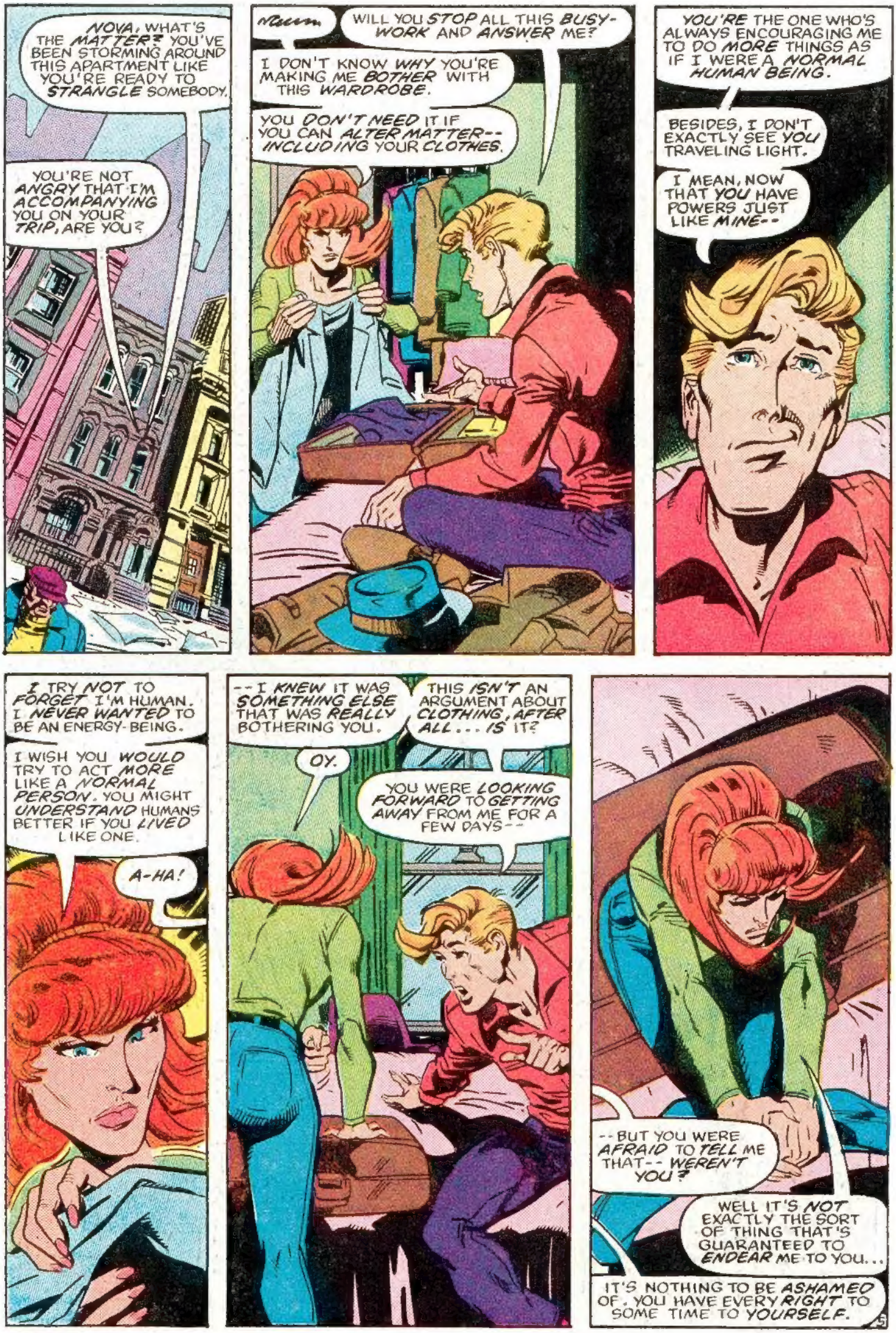
BUT HE IS ALSO . . . E-MAN.

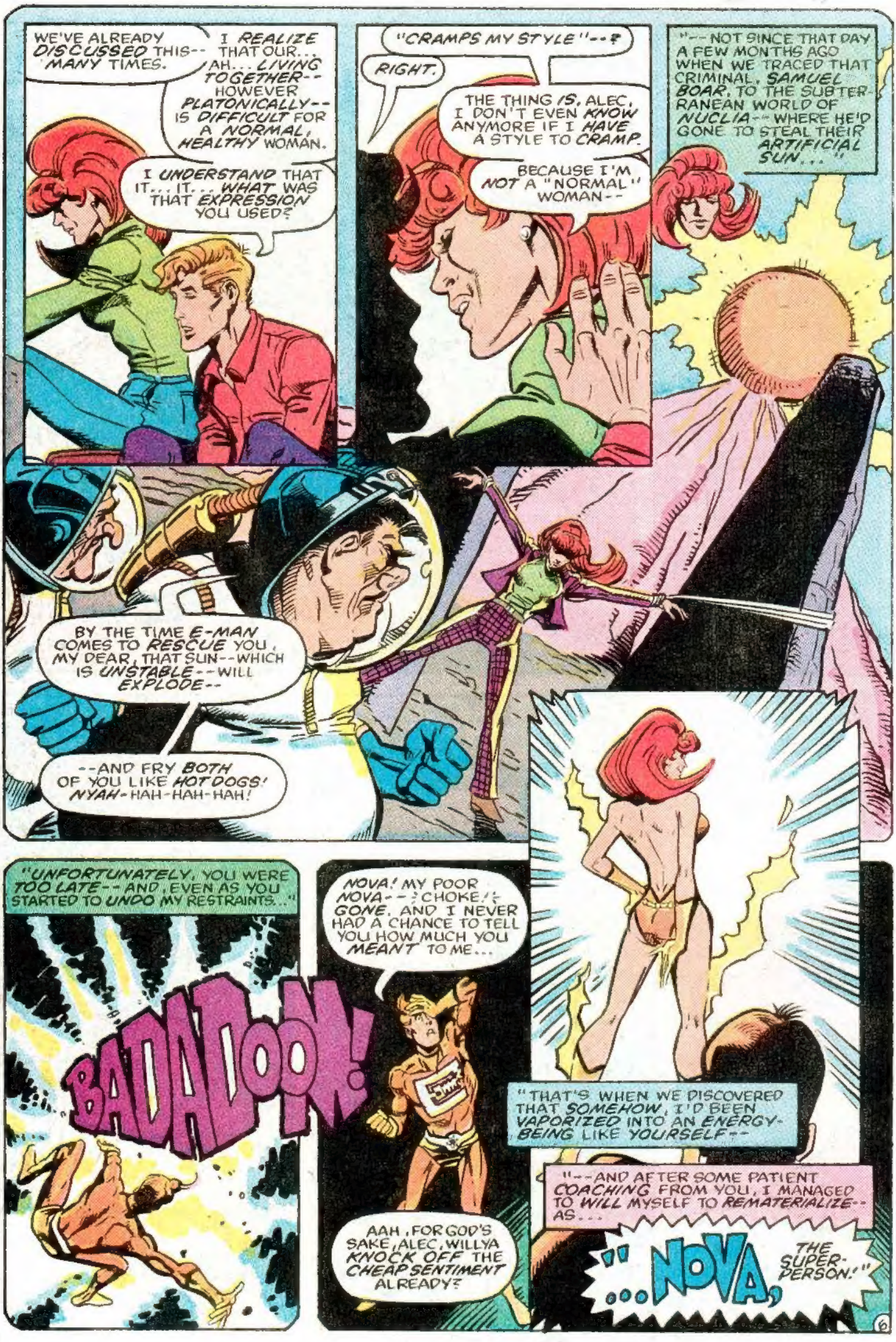
ON THIS WINTER DAY IN NEW YORK -- THE "BIG APPLE", THE LARGEST CITY IN THE U.S. -- HE DOES NOT KNOW HIS LIFE IS ABOUT TO CHANGE PROFOUNDLY.

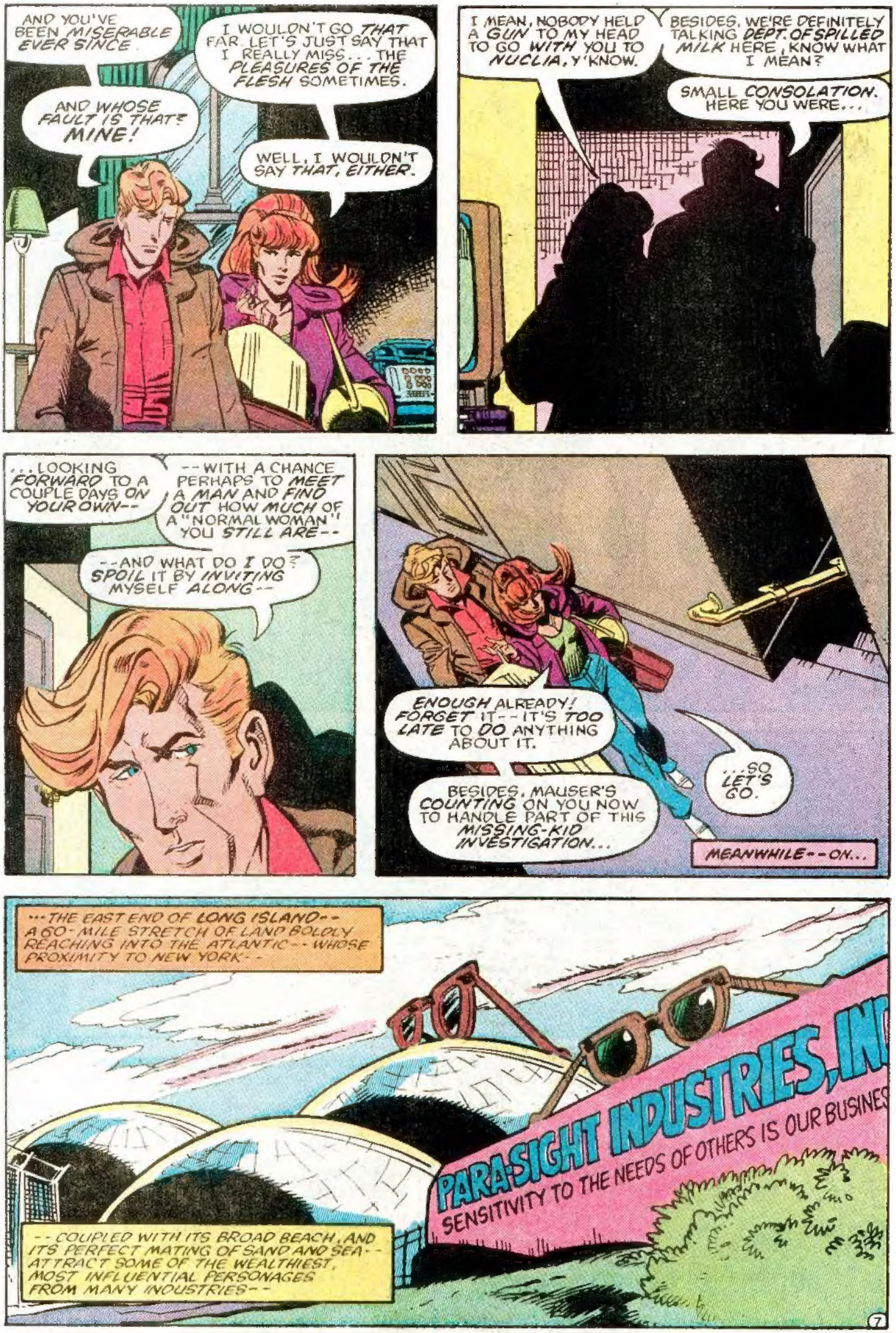
AFTER TODAY, NOTHING FOR HIM -- OR THE WOMAN HE LOVES, BUT WHO DOESN'T LOVE HIM THE SAME WAY -- NOVA KANE, EXOTIC DANCER AND PART-TIME ARCHAEOLOGY STUDENT WILL EVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.

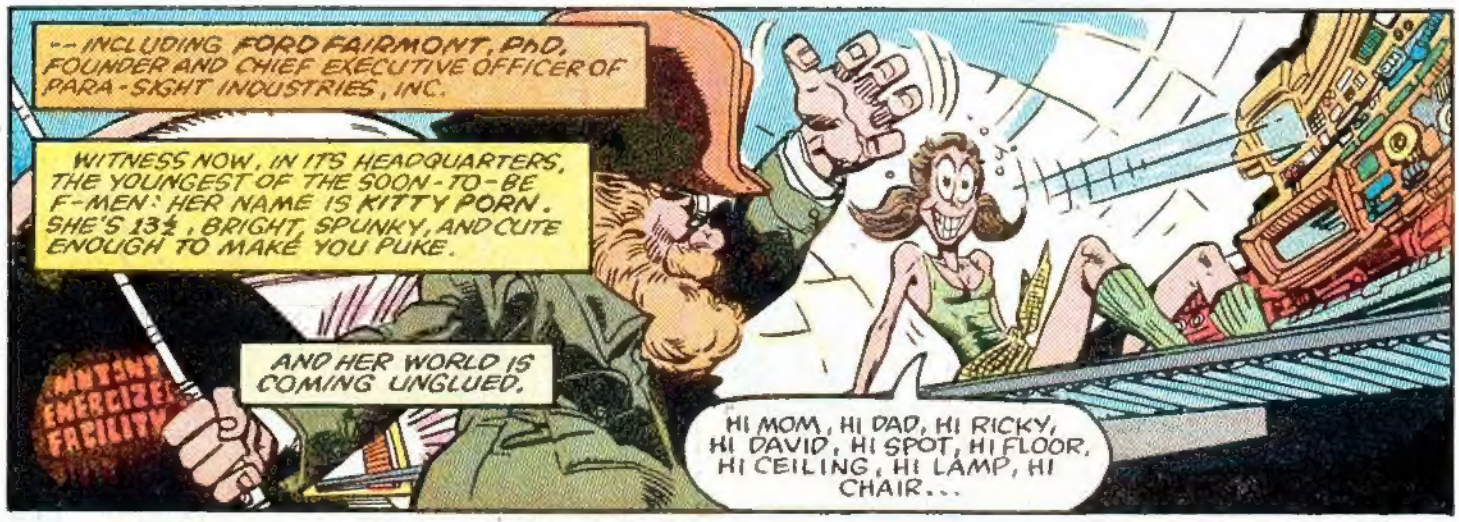
SEVERAL MINUTES LATER--IN THE OFFICE WHERE ALEC TRONN WORKS AS ASSOCIATE TO PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR MICHAEL MAUSER...
HIYA, MICKEY.
HOW MANY TIMES I GOTTA TELL YA, YOU STUPID BIMBO?--
DON'T CALL ME "MICKEY MAUSER!"
OKAY, OKAY, MAUSER. I'LL JUST GIVE ALEC THIS LIST OF THINGS TO DO AROUND THE APARTMENT WHEN I'M OUT OF TOWN...
...THEN I'M OFF TO THE TRAIN STATION AND I'LL BE OUTTA YOUR HAIR, OKAY?
Acme painters
SO LONG, ALEC. DON'T BURN IT DOWN, OKAY?
OKAY, NOVA. HAVE A GOOD WEEKEND.
WELL...AHEM; I DIDN'T MEAN TA SNAP ATCHA, KANE. I'M JUST A LITTLE TENSE.
MY NEPHEW AND HIS GIRL FRIEND HAVE FORCED THEMSELVES ON ME FOR THEIR WHOLE WINTER BREAK...
...AND TRYIN' TO GET THIS PLACE ORGANIZED BEFORE THEY SHOW UP IS MAKIN' ME CRAZY.
OH, LISTEN TO THAT, CARMEN--
DEAR UNCA MIKE
NEW SAYS YOU'RE A PIG. DON'T CARE. COMING ANYWAY.
--HE LIKES KIDS. I JUST KNEW HE'D BE THE RIGHT CHOICE.
MR. MAUSER. I'M CARMEN PORN. THIS IS MY WIFE, MRS. PORN.
YOU DO TAKE MISSING PERSONS CASES, DON'T YOU?
SURE. SURE. IN FACT, I'M WORKIN' ON A BUNCH OF 'EM RIGHT NOW.
BUT THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR ONE MORE. WHAT'S THE STORY?
IT'S OUR DAUGHTER--:SNIFF!--- KITTY. HERE'S HER PICTURE.
3

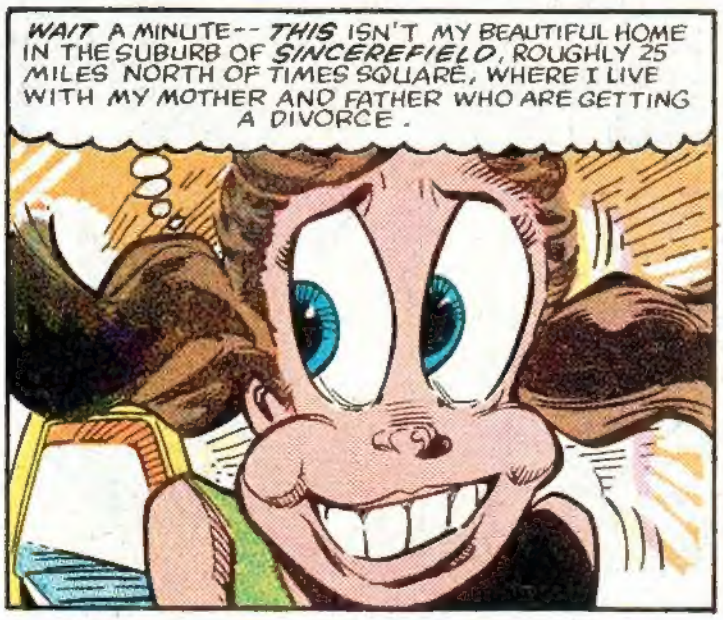

SHE WENT OUT TO THE ISLAND*--;SOB!;--TO A CONCERT AT THE CHESTERFIELD MUSIC FAIR--;SOB!;-THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST...
*LONG ISLAND--FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T THINK THE UNIVERSE ENDS AT NEWARK, N.J.--MIKE.
ORDER
KURT ANGSTNER
PETER RASKOLNIKOV
HOOLIGAN
SNOTT SLUMMERS
HMM... JUST LIKE THESE OTHERS, THEY ALL DISAPPEARED IN THE SAME AREA:
WITHIN A 25-MILE RADIUS OF MARLBORO CORNERS IN CHESTERFIELD COUNTY.
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THEY WERE JUST RUNAWAYS, BUT AFTER THE THIRD CASE CAME MY WAY...
...I STARTED WONDERIN'--
OH, MY STARS AND GARTERS! YOU DON'T MEAN...KIDNAPPING?
NAH... YOU'DA GOTTEN A RANSOM-NOTE BY NOW. I'M THINKIN' MAYBE MURDER.
WAAAAGGH!
OKAY... WE'LL TAKE THE CASE. THAT'S 200 SMACKERS A DAY PLUS EXPENSES.
ANYTHING TO GET OUR LITTLE GIRL BACK!
I JUST HOPE YOU'RE BETTER AT INVESTIGATING THAN COMFORTING DISTRAUGHT MOTHERS.
ACTUALLY, I'M PRETTY GOOD AT THAT, TOO--BUT IT COSTS EXTRA.
GEE, MIKE... COINCIDENTALLY ENOUGH, MARLBORO CORNERS IS WHERE NOVA IS GOING.
SHE'S DOING HER EXOTIC DANCE ROUTINE FOR A SHRINER'S CONVENTION THERE!
HEY, NOW, WAIT A MINUTE--
I...I--I MEAN, WE--COULD BE GONE SEVERAL DAYS, AND...AND...
SO LET'S STOP WASTING TIME ARGUING ABOUT IT--LET'S GO HOME AND GET ME PACKED!
RIIIP!
GOTTA TEACH THAT GUY TO CURB HIS ENTHUSIASM...
SLAM!
4

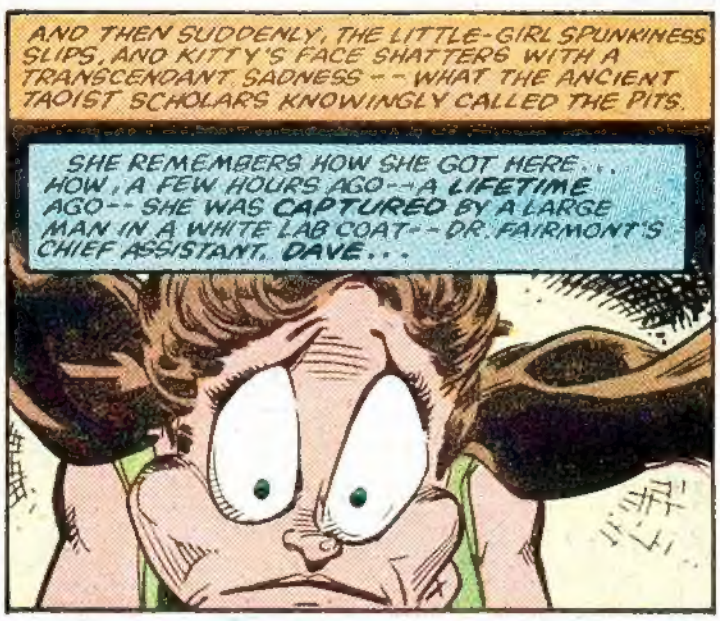

NOVA, WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU'VE BEEN STORMING AROUND THIS APARTMENT LIKE YOU'RE READY TO STRANGLE SOMEBODY.
YOU'RE NOT ANGRY THAT I'M ACCOMPANYING YOU ON YOUR TRIP, ARE YOU?
Nuuu
WILL YOU STOP ALL THIS BUSY-WORK AND ANSWER ME?
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE MAKING ME BOTHER WITH THIS WARDROBE.
YOU DON'T NEED IT IF YOU CAN ALTER MATTER-- INCLUDING YOUR CLOTHES.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S ALWAYS ENCOURAGING ME TO DO MORE THINGS AS IF I WERE A NORMAL HUMAN BEING.
BESIDES, I DON'T EXACTLY SEE YOU TRAVELING LIGHT.
I MEAN, NOW THAT YOU HAVE POWERS JUST LIKE MINE--
I TRY NOT TO FORGET I'M HUMAN. I NEVER WANTED TO BE AN ENERGY-BEING.
I WISH YOU WOULD TRY TO ACT MORE LIKE A NORMAL PERSON. YOU MIGHT UNDERSTAND HUMANS BETTER IF YOU LIVED LIKE ONE.
A-HA!
--I KNEW IT WAS SOMETHING ELSE THAT WAS REALLY BOTHERING YOU.
THIS ISN'T AN ARGUMENT ABOUT CLOTHING, AFTER ALL... IS IT?
OY.
YOU WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING AWAY FROM ME FOR A FEW DAYS--
--BUT YOU WERE AFRAID TO TELL ME THAT-- WEREN'T YOU?
WELL IT'S NOT EXACTLY THE SORT OF THING THAT'S GUARANTEED TO ENDEAR ME TO YOU...
IT'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF. YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO SOME TIME TO YOURSELF.
5

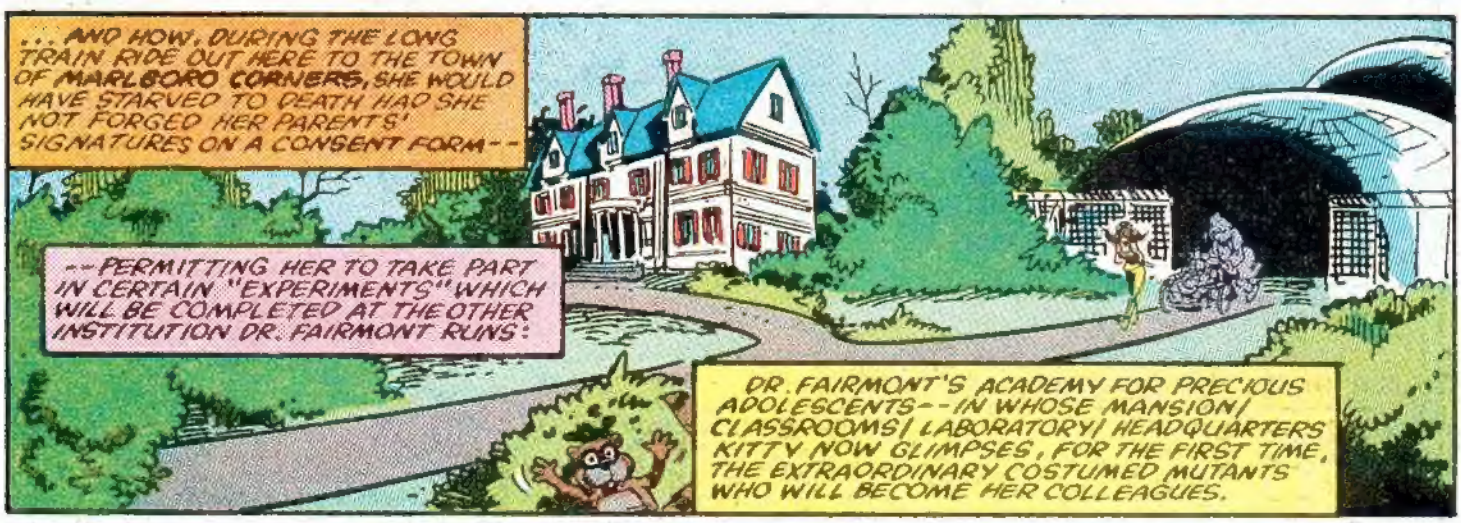

WE'VE ALREADY DISCUSSED THIS-- MANY TIMES.
I REALIZE THAT OUR... AH... LIVING TOGETHER-- HOWEVER PLATONICALLY-- IS DIFFICULT FOR A NORMAL, HEALTHY WOMAN.
I UNDERSTAND THAT IT... IT... WHAT WAS THAT EXPRESSION YOU USED?
"CRAMPS MY STYLE"--?
RIGHT.
THE THING IS, ALEC, I DON'T EVEN KNOW ANYMORE IF I HAVE A STYLE TO CRAMP.
BECAUSE I'M NOT A "NORMAL" WOMAN--
"-- NOT SINCE THAT DAY A FEW MONTHS AGO WHEN WE TRACED THAT CRIMINAL, SAMUEL BOAR, TO THE SUBTERRANEAN WORLD OF NUCLIA-- WHERE HE'D GONE TO STEAL THEIR ARTIFICIAL SUN..."
BY THE TIME E-MAN COMES TO RESCUE YOU, MY DEAR, THAT SUN--WHICH IS UNSTABLE--WILL EXPLODE--
--AND FRY BOTH OF YOU LIKE HOT DOGS! NYAH-HAH-HAH-HAH!
"UNFORTUNATELY, YOU WERE TOO LATE-- AND, EVEN AS YOU STARTED TO UNDO MY RESTRAINTS..."
BA-DA-DOOM!
NOVA! MY POOR NOVA--? CHOKE! GONE. AND I NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH YOU MEANT TO ME...
AAH, FOR GOD'S SAKE, ALEC, WILLYA KNOCK OFF THE CHEAP SENTIMENT ALREADY?
"THAT'S WHEN WE DISCOVERED THAT SOMEHOW, I'D BEEN VAPORIZED INTO AN ENERGY-BEING LIKE YOURSELF--
"--AND AFTER SOME PATIENT COACHING FROM YOU, I MANAGED TO WILL MYSELF TO REMATERIALIZE-- AS...
"...NOVA, THE SUPER-PERSON!"
6


AND YOU'VE BEEN MISERABLE EVER SINCE
I WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR LET'S JUST SAY THAT I REALLY MISS... THE PLEASURES OF THE FLESH SOMETIMES.
AND WHOSE FAULT IS THAT? MINE!
WELL, I WOULDN'T SAY THAT, EITHER.
I MEAN, NOBODY HELD A GUN TO MY HEAD TO GO WITH YOU TO NUCLIA, Y'KNOW.
BESIDES, WE'RE DEFINITELY TALKING DEPT. OF SPILLED MILK HERE, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
SMALL CONSOLATION. HERE YOU WERE...
...LOOKING FORWARD TO A COUPLE DAYS ON YOUR OWN--
--WITH A CHANCE PERHAPS TO MEET A MAN AND FIND OUT HOW MUCH OF A "NORMAL WOMAN" YOU STILL ARE--
--AND WHAT DO I DO? SPOIL IT BY INVITING MYSELF ALONG--
ENOUGH ALREADY! FORGET IT--IT'S TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
BESIDES, MAUSER'S COUNTING ON YOU NOW TO HANDLE PART OF THIS MISSING-KID INVESTIGATION...
...SO LET'S GO.
MEANWHILE--ON...
...THE EAST END OF LONG ISLAND--A 60-MILE STRETCH OF LAND BOLDLY REACHING INTO THE ATLANTIC--WHOSE PROXIMITY TO NEW YORK--
--COUPLED WITH ITS BROAD BEACH, AND ITS PERFECT MATING OF SAND AND SEA--ATTRACT SOME OF THE WEALTHIEST, MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSONAGES FROM MANY INDUSTRIES--
PARA-SIGHT INDUSTRIES, INC
SENSITIVITY TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS IS OUR BUSINES


--INCLUDING FORD FAIRMONT, PhD, FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF PARA-SIGHT INDUSTRIES, INC.
WITNESS NOW, IN ITS HEADQUARTERS, THE YOUNGEST OF THE SOON-TO-BE F-MEN: HER NAME IS KITTY PORN. SHE'S 13¼, BRIGHT, SPUNKY, AND CUTE ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU PUKE.
AND HER WORLD IS COMING UNGLUED.
MUTANT EXERCIZER FACILITY
HI MOM, HI DAD, HI RICKY, HI DAVID, HI SPOT, HI FLOOR, HI CEILING, HI LAMP, HI CHAIR...


WAIT A MINUTE-- THIS ISN'T MY BEAUTIFUL HOME IN THE SUBURB OF SINCEREFIELD, ROUGHLY 25 MILES NORTH OF TIMES SQUARE, WHERE I LIVE WITH MY MOTHER AND FATHER WHO ARE GETTING A DIVORCE.

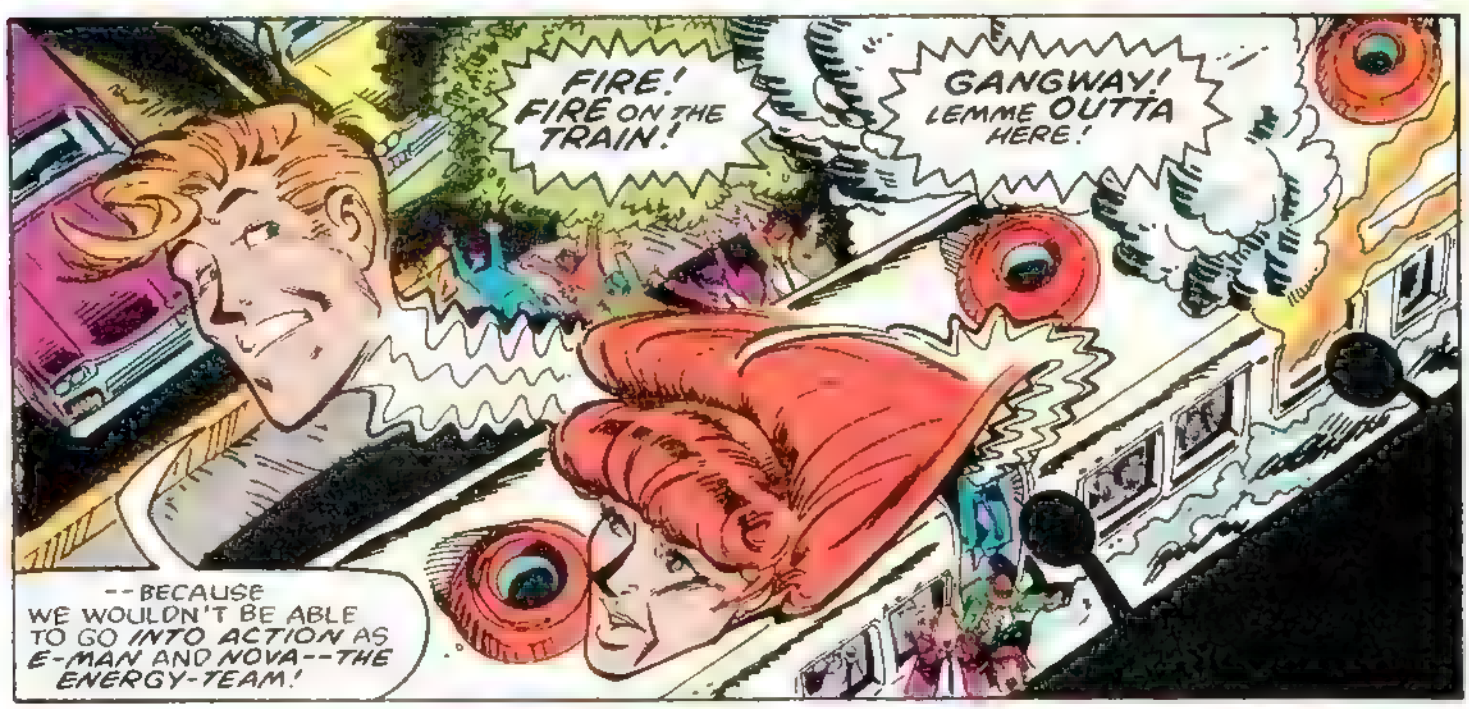

AND THEN SUDDENLY, THE LITTLE-GIRL SPUNKINESS SLIPS, AND KITTY'S FACE SHATTERS WITH A TRANSCENDANT SADNESS -- WHAT THE ANCIENT TAOIST SCHOLARS KNOWINGLY CALLED THE PITS.
SHE REMEMBERS HOW SHE GOT HERE... HOW, A FEW HOURS AGO--A LIFETIME AGO-- SHE WAS CAPTURED BY A LARGE MAN IN A WHITE LAB COAT-- DR. FAIRMONT'S CHIEF ASSISTANT, DAVE...


...AND HOW, DURING THE LONG TRAIN RIDE OUT HERE TO THE TOWN OF MARLBORO CORNERS, SHE WOULD HAVE STARVED TO DEATH HAD SHE NOT FORGED HER PARENTS' SIGNATURES ON A CONSENT FORM--
--PERMITTING HER TO TAKE PART IN CERTAIN "EXPERIMENTS" WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED AT THE OTHER INSTITUTION DR. FAIRMONT RUNS:
DR. FAIRMONT'S ACADEMY FOR PRECIOUS ADOLESCENTS--IN WHOSE MANSION/ CLASSROOMS/ LABORATORY/ HEADQUARTERS KITTY NOW GLIMPSES, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE EXTRAORDINARY COSTUMED MUTANTS WHO WILL BECOME HER COLLEAGUES.

HERE IN THE MANSION'S UH-OH ROOM, SHE REMEMBERS ALL THIS--REMEMBERS WHAT SHE WAS, WHAT SHE HAS BECOME-- AND SHE REALIZES THAT NONE OF WHAT SHE REALLY IS-- THE HUMANITY, THE CARING, THE LOVINGNESS, THE SACCHARINE-- HAS CHANGED.
AND YET--EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED.

THREE HOURS LATER...
NOVA, MAYBE WE SHOULD GET OFF HERE.
NO, ALEC-- MARLBORO CORNERS ISN'T FOR SEVERAL MILES YET.
LOBOTOMEADOW
SUNNIELAWN
NOVA, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND... I DON'T MEAN WE SHOULD GET OFF HERE BECAUSE THIS IS OUR STOP--
DO NOT CROSS TRACK

--I MEAN WE SHOULD GET OFF HERE BECAUSE, UNLESS WE DO...
...INNOCENT PEOPLE WILL BE BURNED--OR TRAMPLED--TO DEATH--
GOOD REASON. I'LL BUY THAT-- SURE.


FIRE! FIRE ON THE TRAIN!
GANGWAY! LEMME OUTTA HERE!
--BECAUSE WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GO INTO ACTION AS E-MAN AND NOVA--THE ENERGY-TEAM!

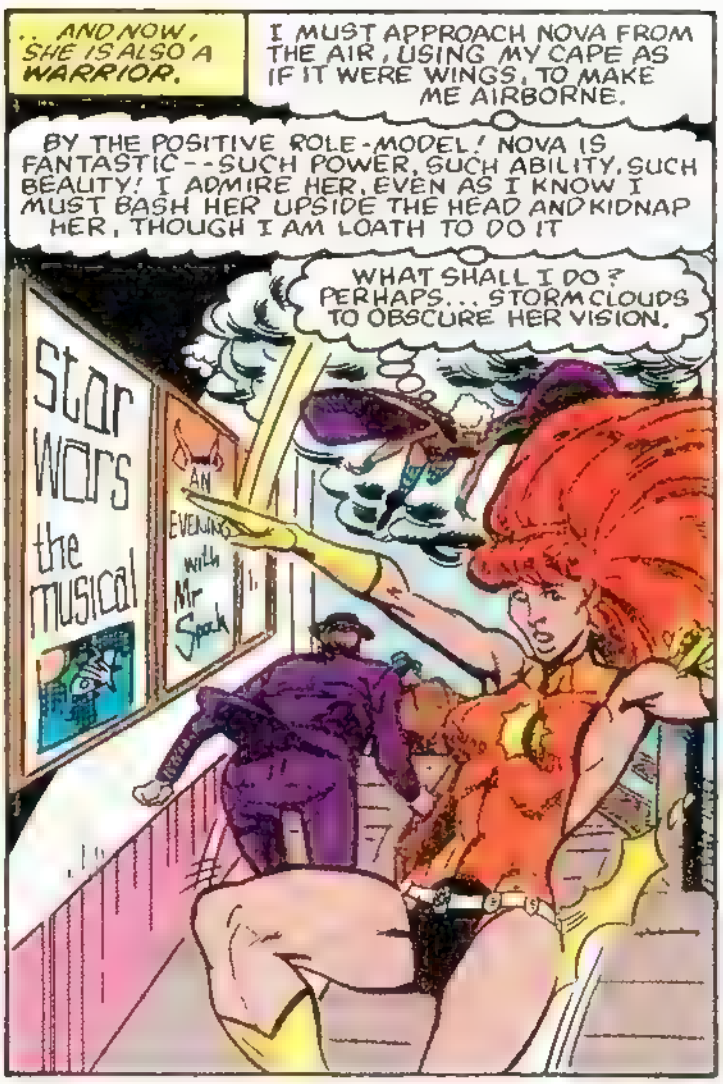
AND IN A MOMENT, ANOTHER MATTER-MANIPULATION GETS THEM AIRBORNE, AND...
I'LL PUT OUT THE FIRE, NOVA.
IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO DIFFICULT--
RIGHT-- AND I'LL EVACUATE THE PASSENGERS!

"--I SAW A LARGE RESERVOIR IN THE TOWNSHIP WE JUST PASSED... AND I CAN DISPLACE ENOUGH OF IT FOR MY PURPOSES--
"--IF I TRANSFORM MYSELF INTO A LARGE ENOUGH BOULDER..."
KERSPLASH

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE TRAIN. .
LET'S SEE NOW. . . FIRST, A LITTLE HEAT. . .
. . . TO CREATE A THERMAL TRICK TO GET THE AIR CIRCULATING--
. . AND WHIP UP A GUST OF WIND TO BLOW THE SMOKE OUT OF THEIR EYES
". . . AND THEN-- I'LL MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO GET OUT. . . "
ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY-- YOU CAN BAIL OUT NOW!
BRA-ZHOOM!
HOORAY FOR NOVA!
AND, ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, E-MAN REAPPEARS, HAVING TAKEN A CUE FROM NOVA AND PERFORMED. . .
. . . ANOTHER THERMAL TRICK-- THIS ONE TO WHIP UP A MINIATURE HURRICANE--
-- AND RAIN ON THAT BLAZE!
SSSST!
AT THAT VERY MOMENT-- NOT FAR AWAY. . .
DID YOU SEE THAT, DR. FAIRMONT?
COME, COME, CLODHOPPUS-- YOU KNOW I HAVE NO VISUAL SENSE! I'M BLIND-- REMEMBER?
THEN I'LL TELL YOU WHAT WE'RE SEEING, SIR! IT'S E'MAN'S PARTNER, NOVA!
SHE HAS JUST THE KIND OF POWER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR!
SKREEE!

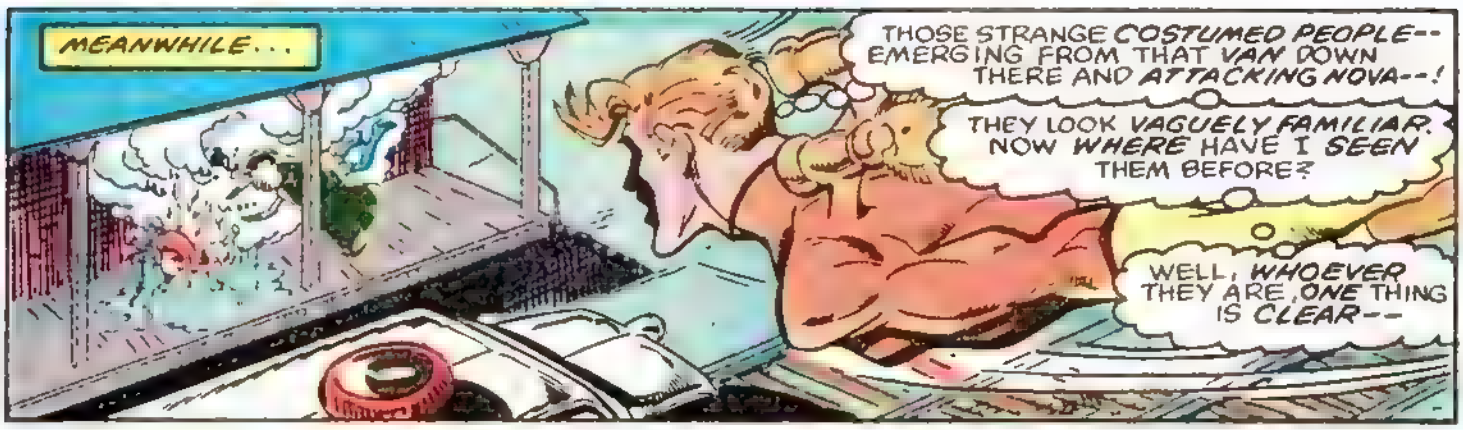
A SHAME DAVE COULDN'T COME WITH US TODAY, BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENT IS IMPECCABLE, RECRUITMENT-WISE.
IF HE SAID THIS NOVA WAS WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR, I'D BELIEVE IT. UNFORTUNATELY, TODAY HE'S ON YOUR BASIC SCOUTING MISSION OF THE TEEN HANGOUTS IN MANHATTAN.
BUT IF WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT HER POWER IS TRUE, SHE'LL BE THE LAST PHASE OF MY PLAN TO MAKE THE FICTIONAL "F-MEN" A LIVING, BREATHING REALITY...
...AND MY MUTANT-ENERGIZER WILL TURN THIS NOVA INTO A REAL-LIFE COUNTERPART OF MY BELOVED JEAN BEIGE--A.K.A. THE ALBATROSS!
BRIOLLE EDITION
F-MEN
WELL, WHAT THE HECK? SUPPOSE I TRUST YOU, CLODHOPPUS?
LET'S GO FOR IT, F-MEN--TAKE 'ER!
I DON'T LIKE THE WAY DR. F IS TALKING. PERHAPS HE'S FORGOTTEN THAT THE PROCESS HE USES TO TURN US FROM ORDINARY YOUNG MUTANTS INTO THE LIVE INCARNATIONS OF THE COMIC BOOK F-MEN ALSO "IMPRINTS" THEIR MEMORIES AND PERSONALITIES ON TOP OF OUR OWN--WHICH MEANS THAT I, ZITPOPS, A.K.A SNOTT SLUMMERS, AM ALSO IN LOVE WITH JEAN BEIGE.

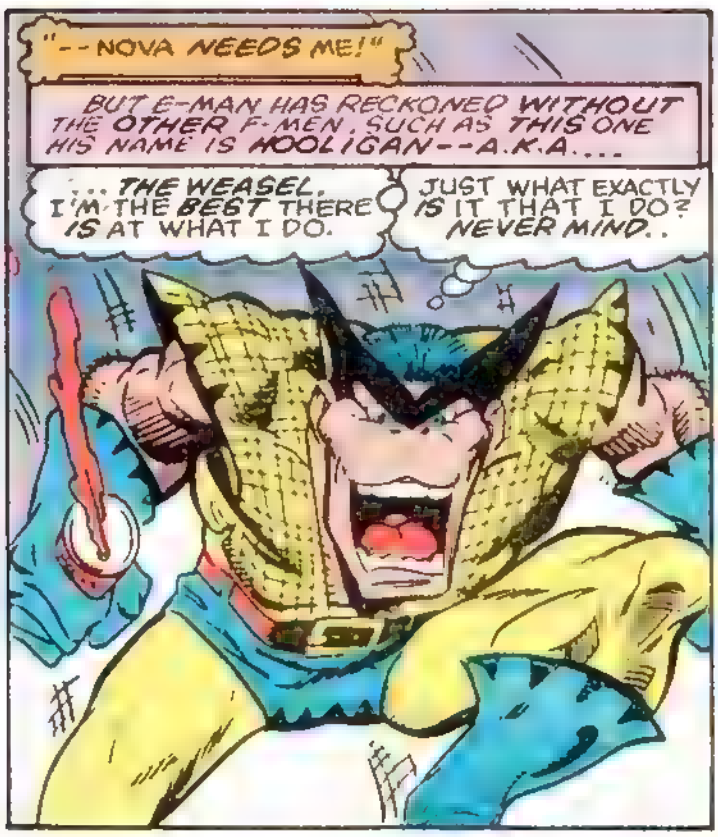
ONE BY ONE, THEY STREAM FORTH FROM INSIDE THE MICROBUS--THE TEAM LEADER BEING FIRST.
HER NAME IS OROREO. THOUGH SHE HAS BEEN HAILED AS A GODDESS, A PRIMITIVE TRIBAL RAIN DEITY, SHE IS IN TRUTH THE MUTANT NAMED DRIZZLE--MISTRESS OF WET STUFF...


...AND NOW, SHE IS ALSO A WARRIOR.
I MUST APPROACH NOVA FROM THE AIR, USING MY CAPE AS IF IT WERE WINGS, TO MAKE ME AIRBORNE.
BY THE POSITIVE ROLE-MODEL! NOVA IS FANTASTIC--SUCH POWER, SUCH ABILITY, SUCH BEAUTY! I ADMIRE HER, EVEN AS I KNOW I MUST BASH HER UPSIDE THE HEAD AND KIDNAP HER, THOUGH I AM LOATH TO DO IT
WHAT SHALL I DO? PERHAPS... STORM CLOUDS TO OBSCURE HER VISION.
Star Wars the musical
An Evening with Mr Spock

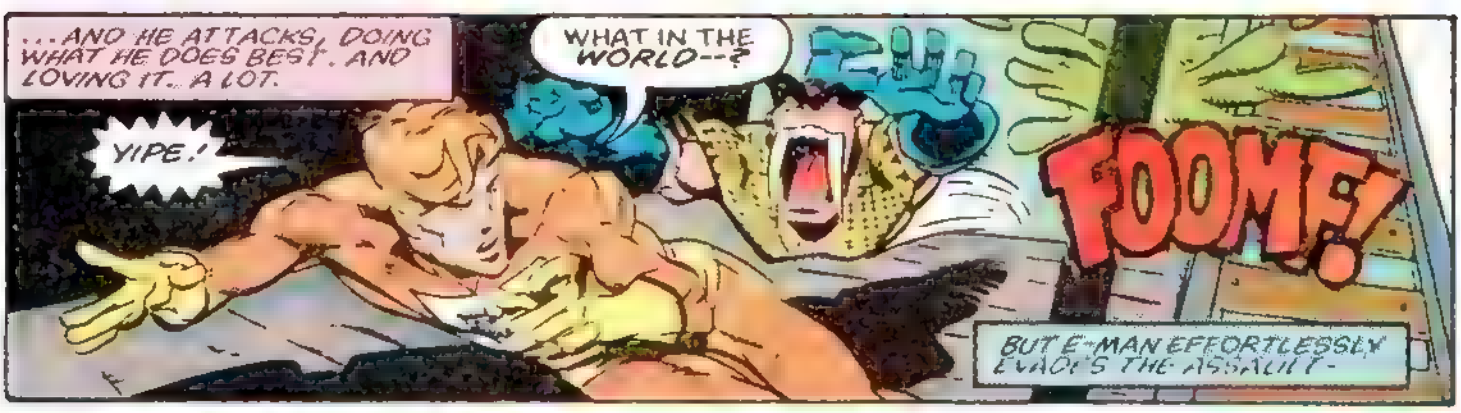
KITTY--NEWLY RECHRISTENED "AIRHEAD"--FOLLOWS. SHE WALKS INTO THINGS, SOMETIMES SHE EVEN GOES THROUGH THEM.
GEE, MY FIRST BATTLE WITH THE F-MEN! AND I GUESS I'M SCARED--SCARED OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN.
WILL I DO ALL RIGHT? WILL THE F-MEN THINK I'M WORTHY OF THEM? WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE? WILL I GET HURT? OR WILL IT BE FUN? WILL IT BE LIKE SEX? WILL I FIND OUT WHAT SEX IS LIKE? WILL I HAVE MY PROBLEMS, LIKE LOW SELF-ESTEEM, PIMPLES, AND NO BREASTS, FOREVER?

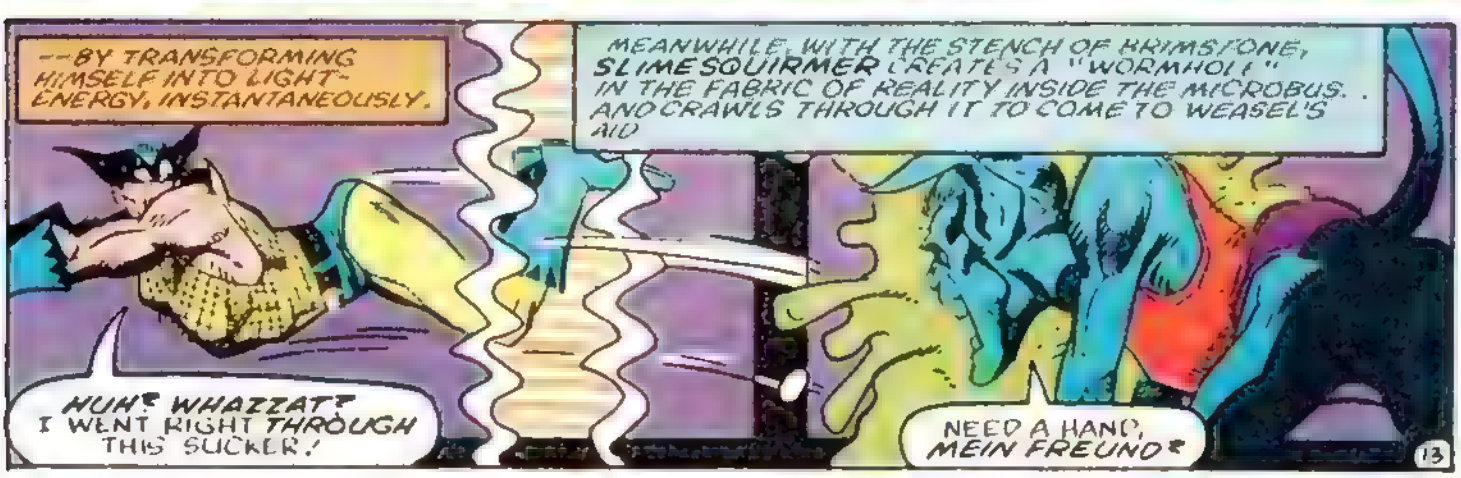
KITTY HAS JUST USED HER POWER TO COME THROUGH THAT WALL AND IS APPROACHING TO HELP ME.
MY LITTLE ONE, MY SISTER--UNLIKE ME, SHE IS NOT CLAUSTROPHOBIC, AND DID NOT ALMOST DIE IN THE DESERT AFTER AN ACCIDENT OF WAR. HOW LUCKY SHE IS. WHAT LOVE I FEEL FOR HER!
Hedda, get your gun!
my fair PAC MAN
12


MEANWHILE...
THOSE STRANGE COSTUMED PEOPLE-- EMERGING FROM THAT VAN DOWN THERE AND ATTACKING NOVA--!
THEY LOOK VAGUELY FAMILIAR. NOW WHERE HAVE I SEEN THEM BEFORE?
WELL, WHOEVER THEY ARE, ONE THING IS CLEAR--

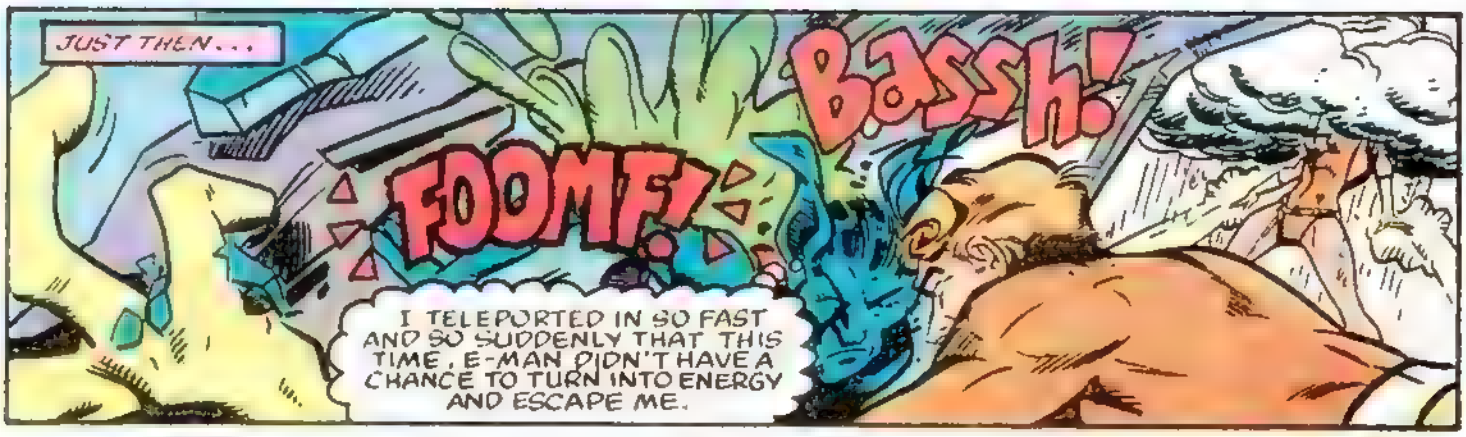

"--NOVA NEEDS ME!"
BUT E-MAN HAS RECKONED WITHOUT THE OTHER F-MEN, SUCH AS THIS ONE HIS NAME IS HOOLIGAN--A.K.A....
... THE WEASEL. I'M THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT I DO.
JUST WHAT EXACTLY IS IT THAT I DO? NEVER MIND..

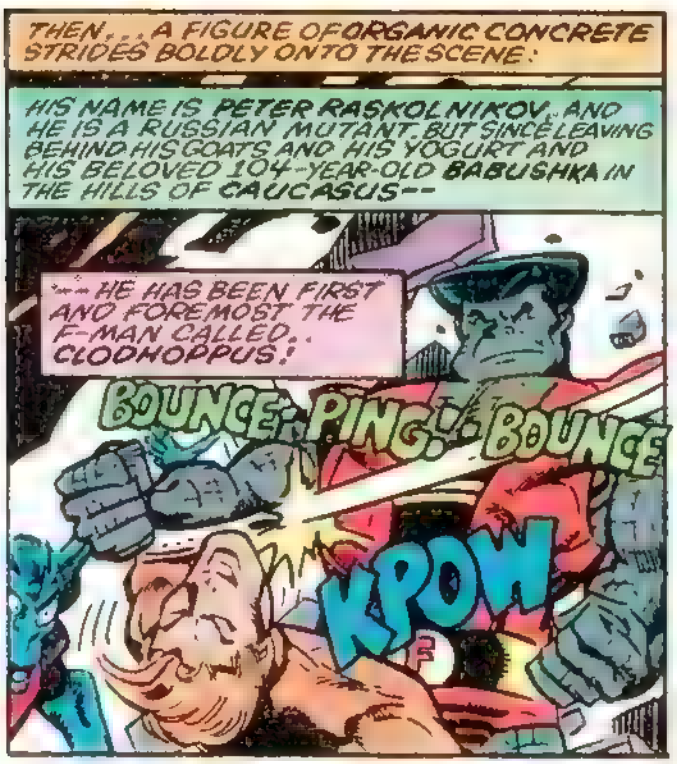
... WHATEVER IT IS, I'M THE BEST THERE IS AT IT.
AND ANYBODY WHO DON'T LIKE IT CAN BLOW IT OUT HIS-- HUH?
SNIKT!
IT'S THAT E-MAN GUY--!
AT WEASEL'S COMMAND, GLEAMING PETULANTIUM FANGS POP OUT OF HIS UPPER GUMS...

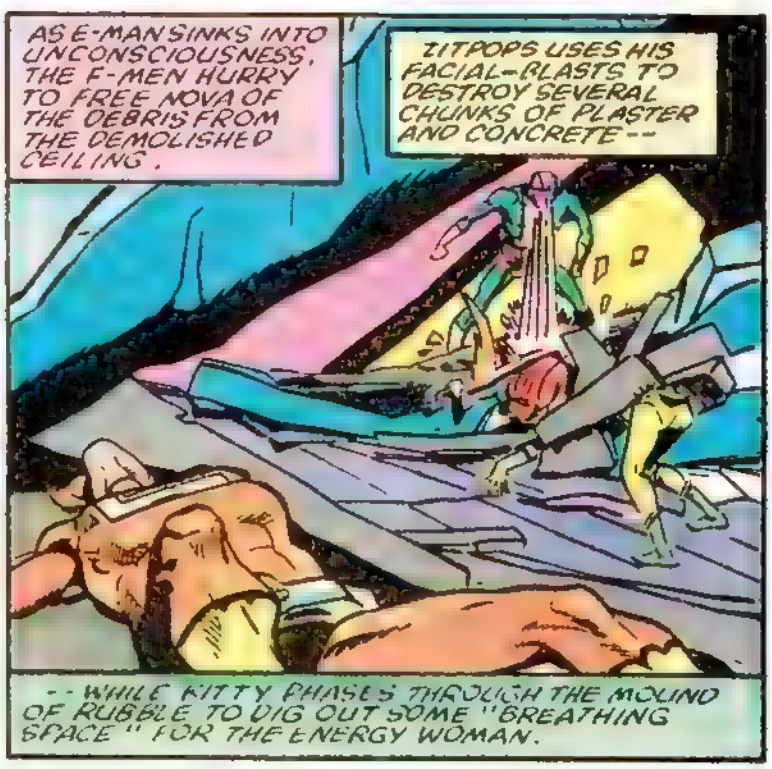

...AND HE ATTACKS, DOING WHAT HE DOES BEST. AND LOVING IT. A LOT.
WHAT IN THE WORLD--?
YIPE!
FOOM!
BUT E-MAN EFFORTLESSLY EVADES THE ASSAULT.

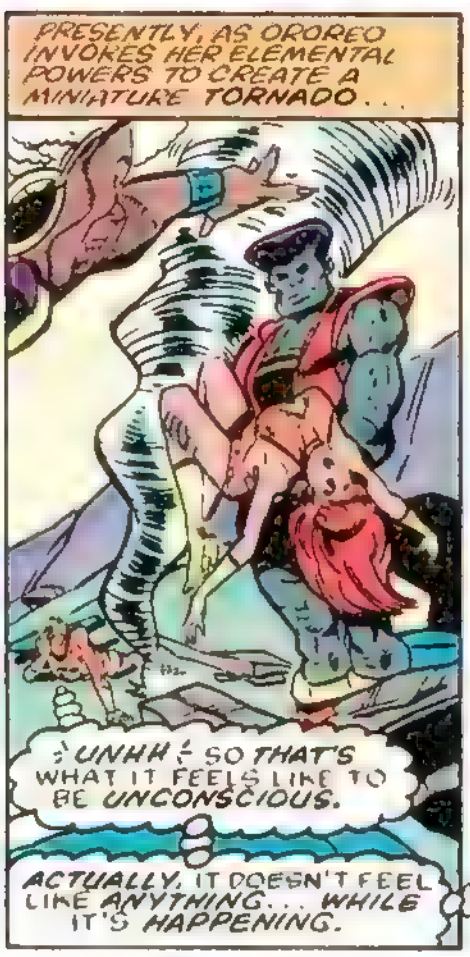

--BY TRANSFORMING HIMSELF INTO LIGHT-ENERGY, INSTANTANEOUSLY.
MEANWHILE, WITH THE STENCH OF BRIMSTONE, SLIMESQUIRMER CREATES A "WORMHOLE" IN THE FABRIC OF REALITY INSIDE THE MICROBUS.. AND CRAWLS THROUGH IT TO COME TO WEASEL'S AID
NUH? WHAZZAT? I WENT RIGHT THROUGH THIS SUCKER!
NEED A HAND, MEIN FREUND?

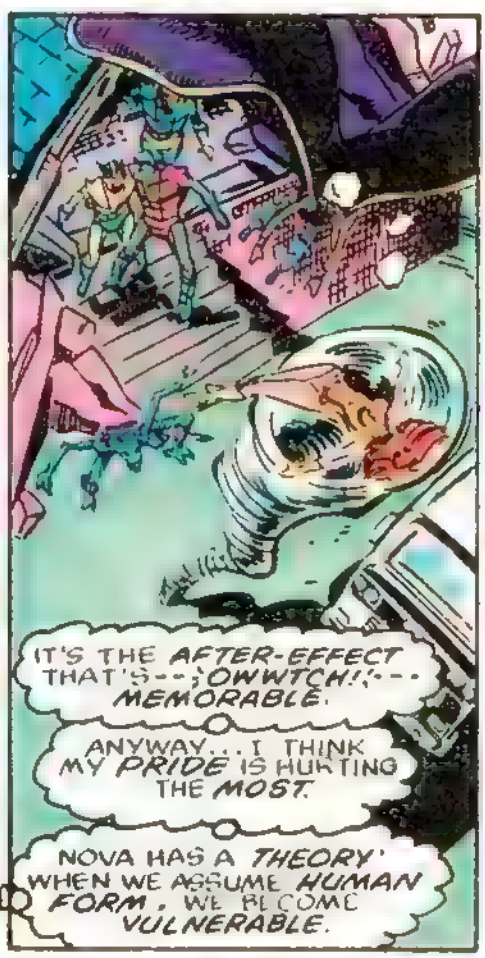
I DON'T NEED NOBODY'S HEL-- ; UNG..
WHONNG
NOW I RECOGNIZE THEM -- THEY DRESS AND ACT JUST LIKE THOSE COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS -- THE F-MEN.
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE -- THEY ARE ONLY FICTIONAL CHARACTERS, AFTER ALL... AREN'T THEY?
AS E-MAN, HAVING TURNED HIMSELF INTO A WAVE OF LIGHT, PROCEEDS TO NOVA'S SIDE, ZITPOPS AND THE F-MAN CALLED CLODHOPPUS START ACROSS THE PARKING LOT TOWARD THE TRAIN STATION
I'VE GOT TO BE SURE MY SPECIAL RUBY BEGONIA VISOR IS IN PLACE, AND I MUSTN'T LET IT SLIP EVEN THE TINIEST FRACTION, OR THE DESTRUCTIVE RAYS EXUDED BY MY MUTANT PIMPLES, WHICH I CAN POP AT WILL, COULD DESTROY EVERYTHING IN SIGHT.
LET'S GO, PETER!
AND, IN SECONDS...
LOB
I'VE DEMOLISHED THAT CEILING-SUPPORT WITH MY FACIAL-BLASTS, RELEASED THROUGH THE VISOR THAT HELPS ME AIM THEM AND CONTROL THEIR INTENSITY
WITH THAT, THE CEILING BEGINS TO COLLAPSE, AND E-MAN RUSHES TO PREVENT A CATASTROPHE.
...CREATING A LARGE, SCOOP WITH HIS FINGERS -- TO CATCH THE FALLING DEBRIS SO THAT IT WON'T HARM INNOCENT BYSTANDERS.


JUST THEN...
FOOMF!
Bassh!
I TELEPORTED IN SO FAST AND SO SUDDENLY THAT THIS TIME, E-MAN DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO TURN INTO ENERGY AND ESCAPE ME.

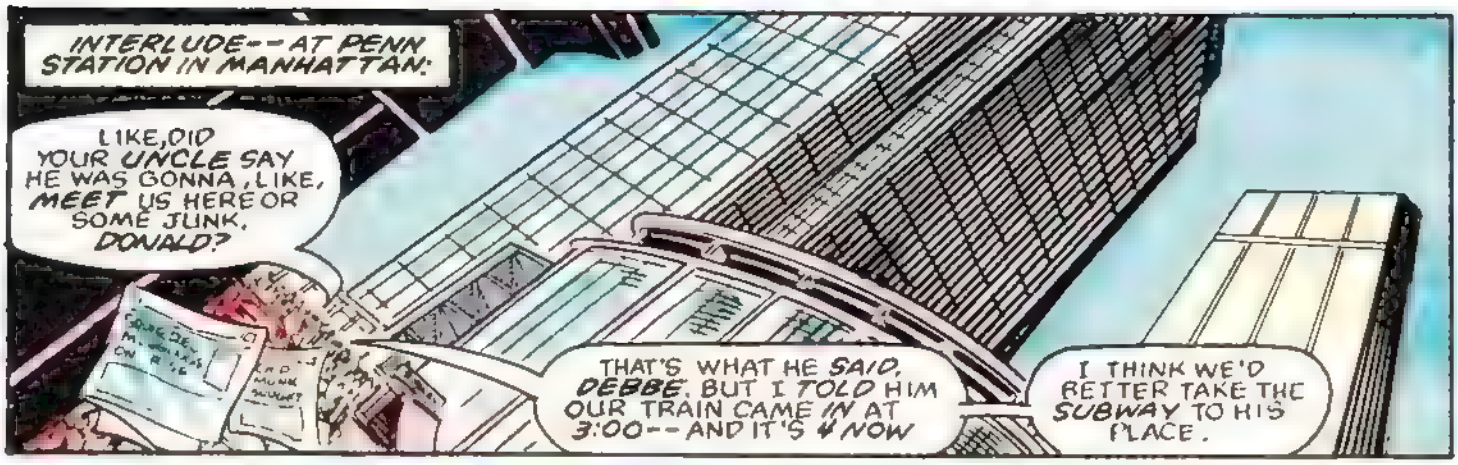

THEN... A FIGURE OF ORGANIC CONCRETE STRIDES BOLDLY ONTO THE SCENE:
HIS NAME IS PETER RASKOLNIKOV, AND HE IS A RUSSIAN MUTANT. BUT SINCE LEAVING BEHIND HIS GOATS AND HIS YOGURT AND HIS BELOVED 104-YEAR-OLD BABUSHKA IN THE HILLS OF CAUCASUS--
--HE HAS BEEN FIRST AND FOREMOST THE F-MAN CALLED: CLODHOPPUS!
BOUNCE-PING!..BOUNCE
KPOW

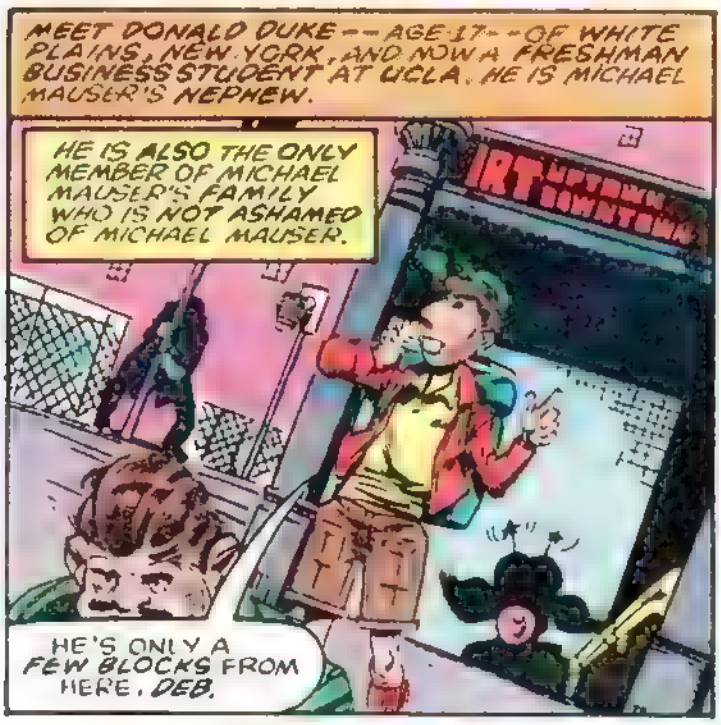

AS E-MAN SINKS INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS, THE F-MEN HURRY TO FREE NOVA OF THE DEBRIS FROM THE DEMOLISHED CEILING.
ZITPOPS USES HIS FACIAL-BLASTS TO DESTROY SEVERAL CHUNKS OF PLASTER AND CONCRETE--
--WHILE KITTY PHASES THROUGH THE MOUND OF RUBBLE TO DIG OUT SOME "BREATHING SPACE" FOR THE ENERGY WOMAN.

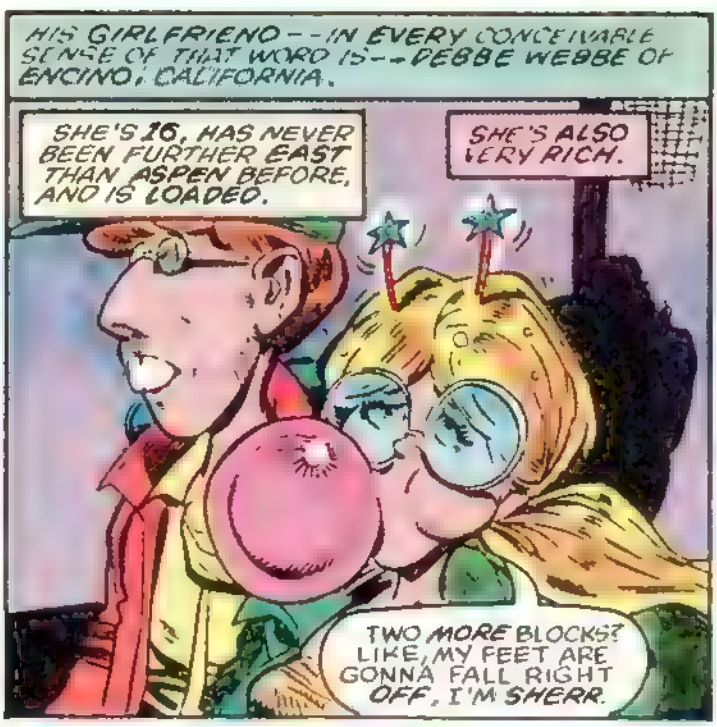

PRESENTLY, AS ORORO INVOKES HER ELEMENTAL POWERS TO CREATE A MINIATURE TORNADO...
:UNHH: SO THAT'S WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE UNCONSCIOUS.
ACTUALLY, IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE ANYTHING... WHILE IT'S HAPPENING.

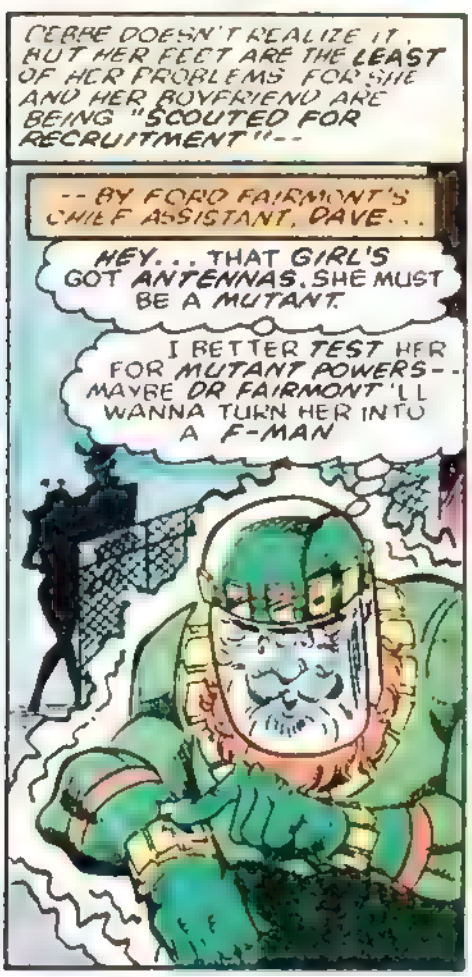

IT'S THE AFTER-EFFECT THAT'S--:OWWTCH!:--MEMORABLE.
ANYWAY... I THINK MY PRIDE IS HURTING THE MOST.
NOVA HAS A THEORY WHEN WE ASSUME HUMAN FORM, WE BECOME VULNERABLE.

...TO ALL THE THINGS AN ORDINARY HUMAN IS AFFECTED BY. LOOKS LIKE SHE WAS RIGHT.
BUT WORST OF ALL, I'VE LET NOVA BE KIDNAPPED--AND I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHERE TO LOOK FOR HER.
I SUPPOSE I'M GOING TO NEED MIKE MAUSER'S HELP...
Va-ROOM


INTERLUDE--AT PENN STATION IN MANHATTAN:
LIKE, DID YOUR UNCLE SAY HE WAS GONNA, LIKE, MEET US HERE OR SOME JUNK, DONALD?
THAT'S WHAT HE SAID, DEBBE. BUT I TOLD HIM OUR TRAIN CAME IN AT 3:00--AND IT'S 4 NOW
I THINK WE'D BETTER TAKE THE SUBWAY TO HIS PLACE.

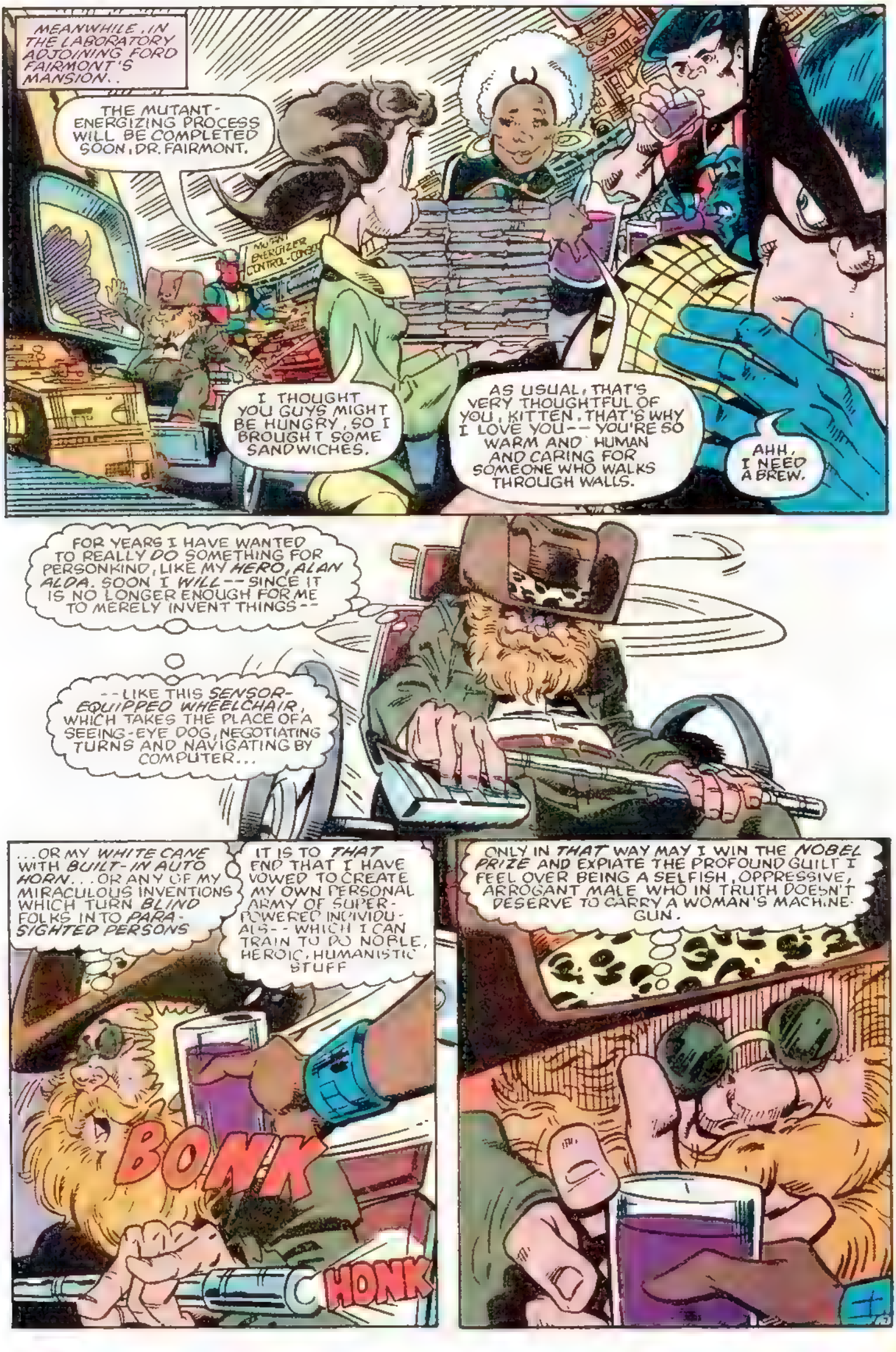

MEET DONALD DUKE--AGE 17--OF WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK, AND NOW A FRESHMAN BUSINESS STUDENT AT UCLA. HE IS MICHAEL MAUSER'S NEPHEW.
HE IS ALSO THE ONLY MEMBER OF MICHAEL MAUSER'S FAMILY WHO IS NOT ASHAMED OF MICHAEL MAUSER.
HE'S ONLY A FEW BLOCKS FROM HERE, DEB.


HIS GIRLFRIEND--IN EVERY CONCEIVABLE SENSE OF THAT WORD IS--DEBBE WEBBE OF ENCINO, CALIFORNIA.
SHE'S 16, HAS NEVER BEEN FURTHER EAST THAN ASPEN BEFORE, AND IS LOADED.
SHE'S ALSO VERY RICH.
TWO MORE BLOCKS? LIKE, MY FEET ARE GONNA FALL RIGHT OFF, I'M SHERR.

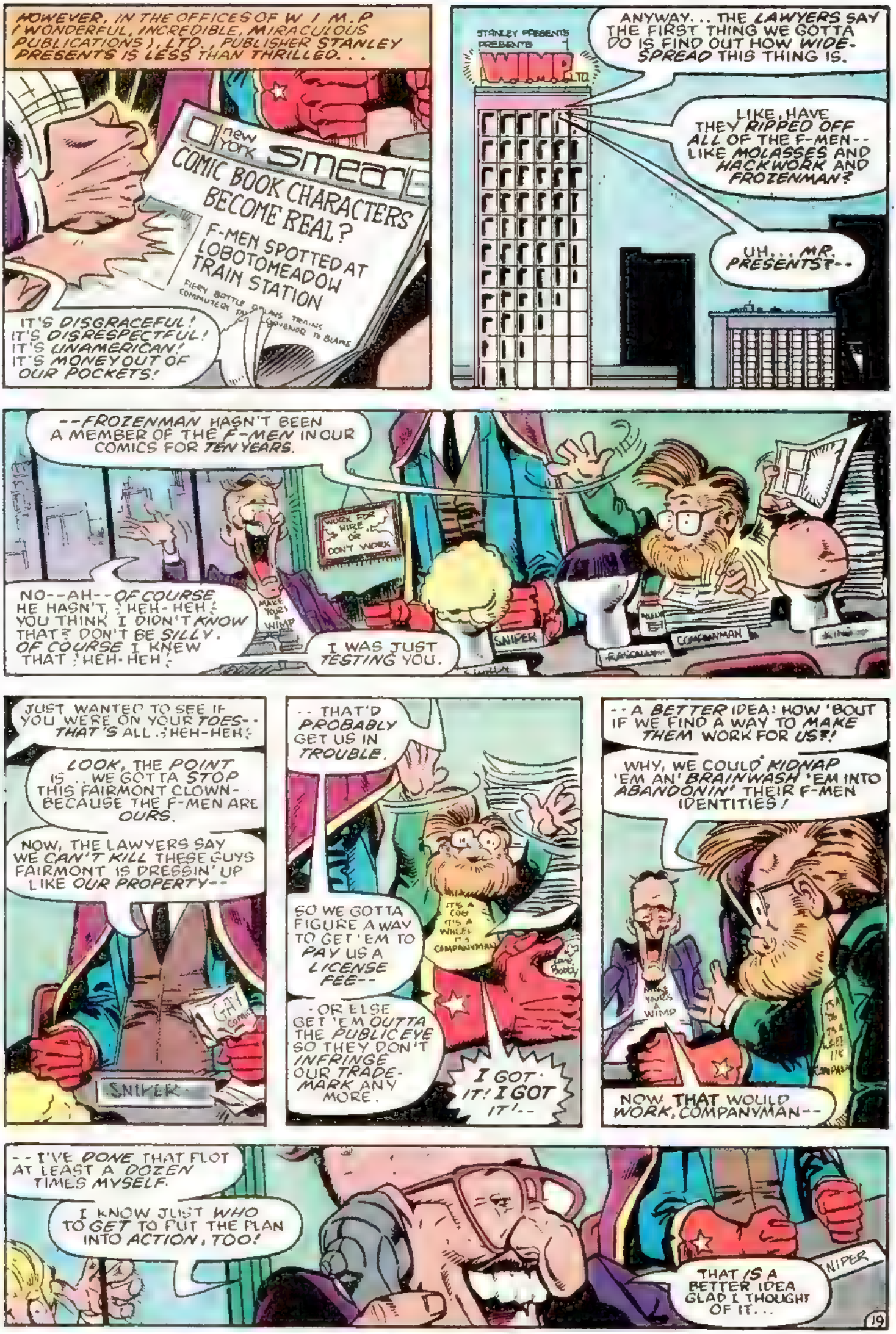

DEBBE DOESN'T REALIZE IT, BUT HER FEET ARE THE LEAST OF HER PROBLEMS FOR SHE AND HER BOYFRIEND ARE BEING "SCOUTED FOR RECRUITMENT"--
--BY FORD FAIRMONT'S CHIEF ASSISTANT, DAVE...
HEY... THAT GIRL'S GOT ANTENNAS. SHE MUST BE A MUTANT.
I BETTER TEST HER FOR MUTANT POWERS--MAYBE OR FAIRMONT'LL WANNA TURN HER INTO A F-MAN

AT THE MOMENT, THERE IS ONLY ONE FACT IN DONALD AND DEBBE'S FAVOR.
DAVE IS ABOUT AS BRIGHT AS THE LITTLE LIGHT THAT GOES ON WHEN YOU OPEN THE REFRIGERATOR.
AARRGGH!!
EAT IT, CREEP!

OR TWO FACTS, IF YOU WANT TO COUNT MAUSER.
HOLY GEEZE--I COMPLETELY LOST TRACK O' TIME! I WAS S'POSEDTA MEET THE KIDS--!
LOOKS LIKE I'M GONNA HAFTA PUT UP WITH A LOTTA CRAP WHEN I FINALLY CATCH UP TO 'EM--!


MEANWHILE, IN THE LABORATORY ADJOINING FORD FAIRMONT'S MANSION..
THE MUTANT-ENERGIZING PROCESS WILL BE COMPLETED SOON, DR. FAIRMONT.
MUTANT ENERGIZER CONTROL-CONSOLE
I THOUGHT YOU GUYS MIGHT BE HUNGRY, SO I BROUGHT SOME SANDWICHES.
AS USUAL, THAT'S VERY THOUGHTFUL OF YOU, KITTEN. THAT'S WHY I LOVE YOU -- YOU'RE SO WARM AND HUMAN AND CARING FOR SOMEONE WHO WALKS THROUGH WALLS.
AHH, I NEED A BREW.
FOR YEARS I HAVE WANTED TO REALLY DO SOMETHING FOR PERSONKIND, LIKE MY HERO, ALAN ALDA. SOON I WILL -- SINCE IT IS NO LONGER ENOUGH FOR ME TO MERELY INVENT THINGS --
-- LIKE THIS SENSOR-EQUIPPED WHEELCHAIR, WHICH TAKES THE PLACE OF A SEEING-EYE DOG, NEGOTIATING TURNS AND NAVIGATING BY COMPUTER...
...OR MY WHITE CANE WITH BUILT-IN AUTO HORN... OR ANY OF MY MIRACULOUS INVENTIONS WHICH TURN BLIND FOLKS INTO PARA-SIGHTED PERSONS
IT IS TO THAT END THAT I HAVE VOWED TO CREATE MY OWN PERSONAL ARMY OF SUPER-POWERED INDIVIDUALS -- WHICH I CAN TRAIN TO DO NOBLE, HEROIC, HUMANISTIC STUFF
BONK
HONK
ONLY IN THAT WAY MAY I WIN THE NOBEL PRIZE AND EXPIATE THE PROFOUND GUILT I FEEL OVER BEING A SELFISH, OPPRESSIVE, ARROGANT MALE WHO IN TRUTH DOESN'T DESERVE TO CARRY A WOMAN'S MACHINE-GUN.

YOU SEE, BEFORE I LOST MY SIGHT, I WAS AN AVID READER OF WONDERFUL, INCREDIBLE, MIRACULOUS PUBLICATIONS, LTD.'S "UNHAPPY F-MEN" COMIC...
...AND I OFTEN THOUGHT THE WORLD WOULD BE A MUCH BETTER PLACE IF THERE COULD ACTUALLY BE SUCH PEOPLE AS THE F-MEN.
AND NOW, I--EH?
IT WORKED DR. F.! THE MUTANT-ENERGIZER HAS CLOTHED NOVA IN THE COSTUME WE PREPARED FOR HER--
--AND MAGNIFIED HER HUMAN-MUTATION POWERS A THOUSAND-FOLD! YOU'VE SUCCEEDED--YOU'VE TURNED HER INTO...
"...the albatross!"

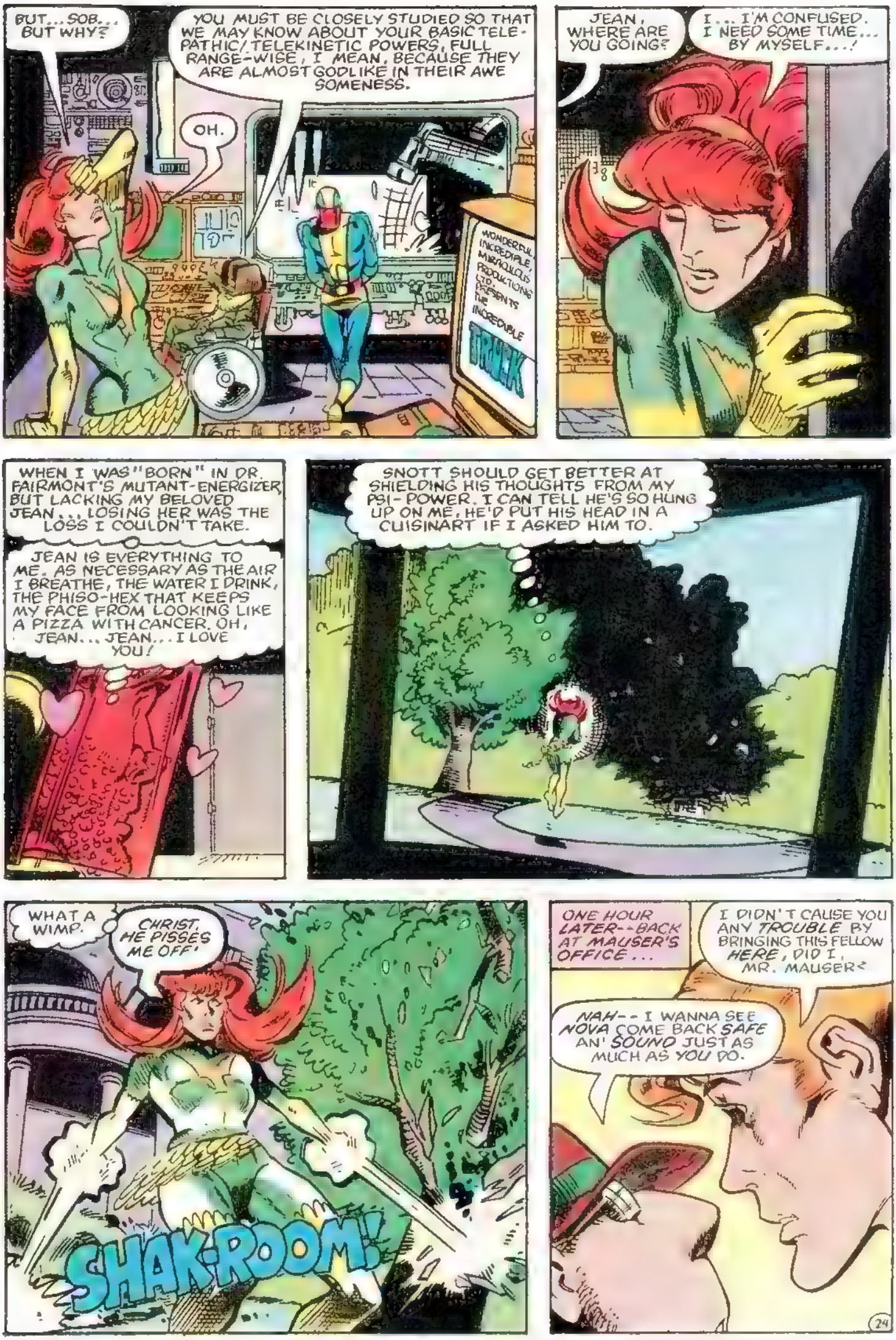

HOWEVER, IN THE OFFICES OF W I M P (WONDERFUL, INCREDIBLE, MIRACULOUS PUBLICATIONS), LTD., PUBLISHER STANLEY PRESENTS IS LESS THAN THRILLED...
new York smear
COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS BECOME REAL?
F-MEN SPOTTED AT LOBOTOMEADOW TRAIN STATION
IT'S DISGRACEFUL! IT'S DISRESPECTFUL! IT'S UNAMERICAN! IT'S MONEY OUT OF OUR POCKETS!
STANLEY PRESENTS PRESENTS
WIMP
ANYWAY... THE LAWYERS SAY THE FIRST THING WE GOTTA DO IS FIND OUT HOW WIDE-SPREAD THIS THING IS.
LIKE, HAVE THEY RIPPED OFF ALL OF THE F-MEN-- LIKE MOLASSES AND HACKWORK AND FROZENMAN?
UH... MR. PRESENTS?--
--FROZENMAN HASN'T BEEN A MEMBER OF THE F-MEN IN OUR COMICS FOR TEN YEARS.
WORK FOR HIRE OR DON'T WORK
NO--AH--OF COURSE HE HASN'T. ;HEH-HEH; YOU THINK I DIDN'T KNOW THAT? DON'T BE SILLY. OF COURSE I KNEW THAT ;HEH-HEH;
MAKE YOURS A WIMP
I WAS JUST TESTING YOU.
SNIPER
COMPANYMAN
JUST WANTED TO SEE IF YOU WERE ON YOUR TOES-- THAT'S ALL. ;HEH-HEH;
LOOK, THE POINT IS.. WE GOTTA STOP THIS FAIRMONT CLOWN-- BECAUSE THE F-MEN ARE OURS.
NOW, THE LAWYERS SAY WE CAN'T KILL THESE GUYS FAIRMONT IS DRESSIN' UP LIKE OUR PROPERTY--
GAY COMICS
SNIPER
-- THAT'D PROBABLY GET US IN TROUBLE.
SO WE GOTTA FIGURE A WAY TO GET 'EM TO PAY US A LICENSE FEE--
-OR ELSE GET 'EM OUTTA THE PUBLIC EYE SO THEY DON'T INFRINGE OUR TRADE-MARK ANY MORE.
IT'S A COW IT'S A WHALE IT'S COMPANYMAN
I GOT IT! I GOT IT!--
--A BETTER IDEA: HOW 'BOUT IF WE FIND A WAY TO MAKE THEM WORK FOR US?!
WHY, WE COULD KIDNAP 'EM AN' BRAINWASH 'EM INTO ABANDONIN' THEIR F-MEN IDENTITIES!
MAKE YOURS A WIMP
NOW THAT WOULD WORK, COMPANYMAN--
--I'VE DONE THAT PLOT AT LEAST A DOZEN TIMES MYSELF.
I KNOW JUST WHO TO GET TO PUT THE PLAN INTO ACTION, TOO!
NIPER
THAT IS A BETTER IDEA GLAD I THOUGHT OF IT...
19

MEANWHILE...
I AM 'P'STR'PH;* SERVANT OF LORD FORD. HALT AT ONCE--IF YOU WISH TO CONTINUE BREATHING!
LIKE, YOU WERE RIGHT, DONNIE. THERE RILLY ARE SOME, LIKE, SUPER-WEIRDOS IN THIS TOWN. BARF ME OWWWWT.
HEY--!
* PRONOUNCED "APOSTROPHE"--MIKE.
CUT THAT OU--
SO, YOU WOULD HELP THESE YOUNG WRETCHES, FILTHY MIDGET?
BEHOLD WHAT REWARD YOU REAP FOR YOUR FOOLHARDINESS!
SKREEEEE
GEEZE, WHO WRITES THIS GUY'S DIALOGUE? HE SOUNDS LIKE SUMPIN OUT OF A COMIC BOOK.
AND BEFORE THE TRAPPED TRIO CAN DRAW ANOTHER BREATH..
DEBBE, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MY UNCLE, MICK--UH--MICHAEL MAUSER.
HIYA. LIKE, UH, WHAT STINKS IN HERE?
CHOOM
OH...MUST BE YESTERDAY'S LUNCH. I FORGOT TO EAT IT...
AND AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
MIKE SHOULD HAVE RETURNED BY NOW FROM PENN STATION WITH HIS NEPHEW AND--
HUH? THAT THING--ARC-ING UP OVER THE SKYLINE--LOOKS LIKE A MAN--?!
COMING CLOSER, THE ENERGY MAN GETS THE SHOCK OF HIS THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD LIFE!
MAUSER AND THE KIDS--CAPTURED BY SOME SORT OF COSTUMED VILLAIN--?
YOU THERE--STOP! THOSE PEOPLE ARE FRIENDS OF MINE--
20

INDEED, E-MAN? I TAKE IT, THEN, YOU WISH ME TO RELEASE THEM?
SO BE IT!
HEY--!
NOW KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, E-MAN, IF YOU WISH EVER TO SEE YOUR "FRIENDS" RETURN TO EARTH!
CHOOM
NO DEALS, WHOEVER-YOU-ARE.
I'LL GET THEM BACK MYSELF-- WHILE YOU'RE FACING A JUDGE!
HAH! DID YOU THINK THAT ENERGY-BOLT OF YOURS WOULD CRACK MY PETULANTIUM ARMOR?
SO SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, YOU SHALL HAVE TO TRY HARDER
DON'T WORRY, I WILL!
DOUBLE-CHOOM!
SEE? I ALWAYS KEEP MY PROMISES.
21

HA-HAH! WRONG AGAIN, MY ENERGETIC FRIEND.
TELL ME--DO YOU SERIOUSLY EXPECT THAT DEBRIS TO DO WHAT YOUR OWN DESTRUCTIVE BLASTS COULD NOT?
I DON'T.
WHAT I DO EXPECT IS FOR YOU TO CONTINUE BEING A SMUG, POMPOUS ASS--AND YOU'RE OBLIGING ME
THANKS TO YOUR DESIRE TO SHOW OFF, YOU'VE DONE EXACTLY WHAT I WANTED--
--NAMELY, STAY IN ONE PLACE LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO DO THIS!
I NOTICED YOU TOUCHING THOSE BUTTONS ON YOUR WRISTBAND--
AND I ASSUMED THEY CONTROLLED THE JET-PACKS IN YOUR BOOTS.
IT APPEARS I WAS RIGHT.
NOW... I'M GOING TO PUT YOU SOME PLACE WHERE YOU CAN'T GET LOOSE--
--AND THEN RESCUE MY FRIENDS IN THEIR RUNAWAY BUBBLE!
MEANWHILE...
HE'S HERE, FELLOWS--
--THE GUY WHO'LL DO THE JOB ON THOSE BOGUS F-MEN! ALLOW ME TO PRESENT--
"--JASON RIGHTGUARD, A.K.A MASTERNOSE--MANIPULATOR OF NOXIOUS SMELLS!"
JASE, HOW YA DOIN'?
MAR-VELOUS, STANLEY-KINS--ABSOLUTELY DIVINE! I'M SO GLAD YOU SCENT FOR ME! HEE HEE!
THAT'S A JOKE! DON'TCHA JUST LOVE IT TO DEATH?
22

YOU READ THE COPY OF THIS DOSSIER I GAVE YOU--ABOUT FORD FAIRMONT?
OH, MY YES--AND I TELLYA, HON, THIS JOB WILL BE SO EASY, IT'LL BE LIKE GIVING HEPATITIS TO THE VILLAGE PEOPLE.
NOW HERE'S THE PLAN! I'M GONNA USE THAT SILLY WOMAN THEY JUST CAPTURED--
--WHAT'S 'ER-NAME--NOVA--AS BAIT.--
--TO ENABLE ME AND MY NINTH CIRCLE OF HELL CLUB TO LURE THOSE F-MACHOS INTO THE ULTIMATE TRAP! HEE-HEE-HEE!
WHILE ACROSS TOWN--AND ROUGHLY 100,000 FEET STRAIGHT UP:
OH, MY GAWD--! GASP, CHOKE! I CAN'T BREATHE--!
Y'MEAN BECAUSE OF TH' ALTITUDE?
NO...GAAAK!--BECAUSE OF YOUR DAY OLD ONION, LIMBERGER CHEESE AND GARLIC SANDWICH! TOTALLY GROOVY, FER SHERR!
WELL, WE'LL SOLVE THAT PROBLEM RIGHT NOW...
KER-POP!
OH MY GOD! IT BROKE--WE'RE GONNA DIE!
JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS, AREN'T YOU?
E-MAN! BOY, AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU!
I'M GLAD TO SEE HIM, TOO.
WHAT IS HE?
AND AS E-MAN IS INTRODUCED TO DONALD DUKE AND DEBBIE WEBBE...
MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, NOV--UH, JEAN.
I'VE SUMMONED A COLLEAGUE WHO'S A SPECIALIST IN PHYSIOLOGY, MUTANT-WISE--MOIRA MAC BAGLADY.
SHE'S ON HER WAY HERE FROM BOOR ISLAND EVEN AS WE SPEAK.


BUT... SOB... BUT WHY?
YOU MUST BE CLOSELY STUDIED SO THAT WE MAY KNOW ABOUT YOUR BASIC TELEPATHIC/TELEKINETIC POWERS, FULL RANGE-WISE, I MEAN, BECAUSE THEY ARE ALMOST GODLIKE IN THEIR AWESOMENESS.
OH.
WONDERFUL INCREDIPLE, MARVELOUS PRODUCTIONS LTD. PRESENTS THE INCREDIPLE
TRUCK
JEAN, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I... I'M CONFUSED. I NEED SOME TIME... BY MYSELF...!
WHEN I WAS "BORN" IN DR. FAIRMONT'S MUTANT-ENERGIZER, BUT LACKING MY BELOVED JEAN... LOSING HER WAS THE LOSS I COULDN'T TAKE.
JEAN IS EVERYTHING TO ME. AS NECESSARY AS THE AIR I BREATHE, THE WATER I DRINK, THE PHISO-HEX THAT KEEPS MY FACE FROM LOOKING LIKE A PIZZA WITH CANCER. OH, JEAN... JEAN... I LOVE YOU!
SNOTT SHOULD GET BETTER AT SHIELDING HIS THOUGHTS FROM MY PSI-POWER. I CAN TELL HE'S SO HUNG UP ON ME, HE'D PUT HIS HEAD IN A CUISINART IF I ASKED HIM TO.
WHAT A WIMP.
CHRIST, HE PISSES ME OFF!
SHAK-ROOM!
ONE HOUR LATER--BACK AT MAUSER'S OFFICE...
I DIDN'T CAUSE YOU ANY TROUBLE BY BRINGING THIS FELLOW HERE, DID I, MR. MAUSER?
NAH-- I WANNA SEE NOVA COME BACK SAFE AN' SOUND JUST AS MUCH AS YOU DO.
24

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I KINDA MISS HAVIN' 'ER AROUND TA YELL AT.
AND SINCE THE KIDS TOLD US THIS SCUM WORKS FER FAIRMONT...
...BRINGIN' 'IM HERE WAS THE SMARTEST THING YOU COULDA DONE!
AWRIGHT, JERK-FACE--LAST CHANCE! WHERE DOES THIS CREEP FAIRMONT HANG OUT?
AN' WHAT HAS HE DONE WIT' NOVA?
I AIN'T TELLIN' YOU NOTHIN', SHAMUS-- NOT EVEN IF YA TRY AN' BEAT IT OUTTA ME!
OH, YEAH? WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT. MY METHODS ARE PRETTY SOPHISTICATED.
RUBBER HOSE.
RUBBER HOSE.
BLACKJACK.
BLACKJACK.
PULSE AND HEART RATE NORMAL. RESPIRATION STEADY.
OKAY. I'M GOIN' IN.
SORRY I HAFTA DO THIS, DAVE-- GRUNT!--NOTHIN' PERSONAL, YA UNNERSTAND--
--IT'S JUST HOW I DO WHAT I DO.
WHAPPETY WHAPPETY WHAPPETY WHAP!
SOME TIME LATER...
A TOUGH-GUY, HUH? WON'T CRACK, HUH? NO MORE "MR. NICE GUY, THEN.
WHA-WHAT'S THAT? WHA-WHATCHA GONNA DO WITH IT?
IT'S A CONTINUOUS VIDEOTAPE LOOP OF "KRAMER VS. KRAMER." WE'RE GONNA PUT IT ON... THEN LEAVE.
WE COULD BE GONE FOR DAYS.
I'LL TELL YA ANYTHING YA WANNA KNOW...
25

AND EVEN AS E-MAN AND MAUSER PREPARE FOR AN ASSAULT ON FORD FAIRMONT'S "HOME TURF"--
--ON THAT SELFSAME TURF...
I SHOULDN'T HAVE LOST MY TEMPER. I SHOULD HAVE STAYED AND TOLD SNOTT HOW MUCH HE REALLY MEANS TO ME... HOW HE WILL ALWAYS BE THE YIN TO MY YANG, THE JADE STALK TO MY LOTUS PETAL, THE--
SNIFF, SNIFF! WHAT'S THAT... STRANGE FRAGRANCE...?
GET A WHIFF OF THIS, BITCH--MY PSYCHIC RAPPORT-BUILDING AND SENSE OF TIME-AND-PLACE DISORIENTING INCENSE!
SOON NOW, YOUR MIND WILL BE MY PLAY-TOY...
INDEED IT WILL--AND SOONER, PERHAPS, THAN EVEN JASON RIGHT-GUARD HIMSELF SUSPECTS!
NUH? WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE AM I? WHA-- WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
WAIT-- NOW I REMEMBER--
CAMP TUMMELER 1959
-- I'M JOANNE BERG, AND I'VE JUST SPENT THE SUMMER HERE AT TUMMELER'S MUSIC CAMP STUDYING THE OCARINA AND I REALLY CAN'T WAIT TO GET HOME TO LARCHMONT...
CAMP TUMMELER 1959
...AND GO ON SHOPPING SPREES AT BLOOMIE'S WITH POPPA'S CHARGE CARD...
I MISSED YOU, PRINCESS.
YEAH? THEN MAYBE NOW, ALVIN, YOU'LL STOP ALL THIS NONSENSE WITH THE OCARINA AND LET HER STAY HOME IN THE SUMMER...
...WHERE SHE SHOULD MAYBE MEET A NICE YOUNG DOCTOR AND LIVE AND BE WELL...?
IT'S WORKING. I'M GIVING THE LITTLE VIXEN A TASTE OF HER INNERMOST DESIRES.
FOR WITHIN HER SWEET SOUL LURKS A SOUR DEMON, A YIN COUNTERPART TO THE SURFACE YANG, AND AS THE WISE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER DAH'G CHOU HAS SAID--
BUT LET US LEAVE THIS SCENE OF BOGUS DOMESTIC BLISS...
26

...AND TURN OUR ATTENTION TO MAUSER'S OFFICE ONE HOUR LATER--WHERE WE FIND FORD FAIRMONT'S ASSISTANT DEMONSTRATING A HERETOFORE HIDDEN TALENT TO AN APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE OF COCKROACHES--
--SPECIFICALLY, THE TALENT OF...AN ESCAPE-ARTIST!
AND ONCE HIS HANDS ARE FREE, HE UNVEILS ANOTHER SECRET FOR HIS AUDIENCE OF NONE: A MINIATURE TWO-WAY RADIO, CONCEALED INSIDE HIS BEARD!
DAVE TO DR. F... COME IN, DOC...
DAVE! WHERE ARE YOU? WHAT HAPPENED?
I--I GOT BAD NEWS... I HADDA TELL E-MAN WHERE YOU ARE... SOB! I HAD TO...
HE--HE FORCED IT OUTTA ME--I COULDN'T HELP IT! SOB!...
"...AND NOW...HE'S ON HIS WAY!"
WELL, THAT'S RATHER DISTRESSING--NEWS-WISE, I MEAN.
BUT DON'T AGONIZE OVER IT, DAVEY--I'M SURE YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD.
AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT US, WE'RE PREPARED FOR HIM!
WHILE--AT THAT VERY MOMENT--IN THE SECRET HEADQUARTERS OF JASON RIGHTGUARD AND THE NINTH CIRCLE OF HELL CLUB...
PERHAPS YOU ARE PREPARED FOR E-MAN, YOU SILLY TWIT--BUT THE REAL QUESTION, FORD KINS, IS...
...ARE EITHER YOU OR E-MAN OR THE WORLD--PREPARED FOR...
"...THE BLACK PRINCESS!"
OH, MARY... DON'T ASK!
NEXT DARK ALBATROSS MUST DIE!

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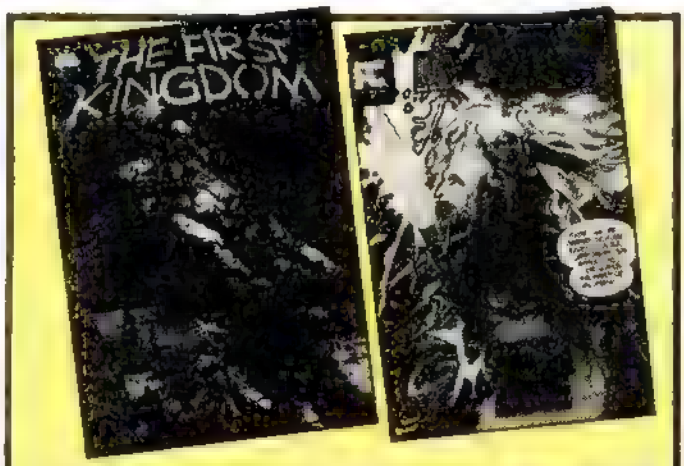

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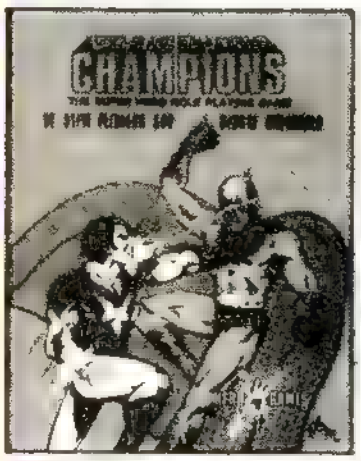

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Do you want to know what makes an editor feel good? I mean, besides receiving scripts and art on time? I'll tell you: E-Man hasn't been in print for about seven years now, and people aren't really certain exactly how we're handling the character, but we still received enough mail to fill a lettercol – and then some – from people who were so excited about the mere prospect of seeing E-Man again they just had to let us know!

Most of the mail runs along the lines of "Gee, it certainly is going to be great to see E-Man back on the comics racks!" Well, obviously we feel the same way, although we're quite anxious to find out how you like our first issue. We'll have letters on issue #1 next month.

(Important note: we will send out advance photocopies of our future first issues to people randomly selected from our legion of letter writers – so if you'd like the opportunity to get a two month jump on your friends by receiving a photocopy of a future #1, write to E-Mail or to Warped Words and tell us what you think about the current issue!)

But I should share some of the great thoughts we've received on E-Man thus far:

Dear Sirs:

Being an **E-Man** fan back in 1975 and being a fan of Joe Staton, I was delighted when I read that **E-Man** was making a comeback and that Joe Staton would be doing the art chores.

Good luck with First Comics. May you last long!

Fred Holycross
4300 Harpen Road
Pittsburgh, PA

Dear Subscription Department.

When I saw that you were offering subscriptions to Joe Staton's revived **E-Man**, I cut out the coupon and wrote out the enclosed check. Please begin my subscription with issue number 1

E-Man always was my favorite of the old Charlton line and I am delighted to see it revived with Joe Staton still at the drawing board. I just hope that scripts will be up to the high standards of the earlier issues and that the quality of your printing will be superior to Charlton's. I know Joe Staton's artwork will continue to thrill my eyeballs. Anyway, it's time he got back to drawing instead of watching all those soap operas.

Please let me know if Joe Staton will be doing any other books for you so that I may subscribe to them as well.

Terry Hughes
6205 Wilson Blvd.
Falls Church VA

Watching all those soap operas? Perhaps you missed all the fine comics Joe worked on over at DC the past umpteen years. In any event, I'm sure Joe will be happy to take all the time left over after turning out 28 pages of pencils and inks and holding down the art director's slot here at First, and start working on a new book. As a matter of fact, it just so happens

To Whomever:

I have heard you are planning an **E-Man** series. Good. I have liked him for a long time. Maybe you could get ROG-2000, Steve Ditko's Killjoy, or Travis to be a back-up in **E-Man**. Or better yet, an issue-length story each month!

Mike Nielsen
Box 63
College Spring, Iowa

*Hey, Mike, your wish is our command we're doing 27 page **E-Man** stories each month, which is almost issue-length, and ROG-2000 put in an appearance last month. ROG's got a standing invitation over here, believe me*

Dear Mr. Staton:

Joe, I remember your **E-Man** books – and the beautifully voluptuous Nova Kane, **E-Man's** stripper/college co-ed girl friend. I shall never forget your work with **E-Man**, and how you drew Nova – most especially on stage!

I think my all time favorite vision is where Nova is captured and forced to clean off the brown dye she used to look middle-eastern. I hope that Nova didn't give up stage dancing altogether when she gained super abilities. I like to remember her as the sensitive, loving and very generous girl that first helped **E-Man**.

Thanks for some fine dreams, Joe!

William McKee
P O. Box 512
Manhattan, Kansas

As you might guess from reading this month's story, Bill, Nova's headed off on something of a new direction. Just where she's going will be revealed next month in the conclusion to our two-parter, but I'm certain she will hold on to her place in your heart

Dear Mike·

Being a diehard Steve Ditko fan, I was initially drawn to Charlton's **E-Man** by the likes of Liberty Belle and the enigmatic Killjoy.

If the truth be known, I never cared much for humorous comics and found it hard to embrace Joe Staton's cartoonish style

As time passed and Plastic Man found a home in Adventure Comics, I couldn't believe the brilliant satire being produced by Martin Pasko and Joe Staton. I was hooked. I couldn't get enough of their warped sense of humor. Unfortunately, such was not the case with DC. Plas series was cancelled and suddenly the world seemed so serious

However, with the advent of First Comics, Staton's **E-Man** has returned to the delight of his multitude of fans, and original dabblers like me aren't going to be cheated out of the lunacy that this title portends

Jeffrey Lowndes
809 Sunset Street
Scranton, PA

*Well then, Jeffrey, it looks like First Comics has a double-treat for you this month: if you'll take a quick look at this month's issue of **Warp** #2, you'll find the first of a three-part Faceless Ones spin-off pencilled and inked (in the "twice-up" 1950's style) by Mr. Ditko. We'd love to*

turn Steve's creative energies loose on something completely new – and, of course, if we receive sufficient demand, we'd be all too happy to continue The Faceless Ones series for, oh, say, about one hundred years.

In the two days it's taken me to complete this lettercol, we've started receiving response to our advance copies of our first issue. We'll run next month's column as promised, but we did receive one letter that is far too, ah, interesting to hold onto:

Hey, You

Now wait a minute. You guys sent *me* an advance copy of **E-Man** #1? Is this a joke? Are you becoming serious? Will Kenny and Alice ever find their way back to the Ranger Station?

Okay, you pathetic little worms, prepare yourself for a blast of ice-cold, hard-hitting, no-nonsense criticisms, numbered for your (if not my) convenience:

1) The cover. Covers are my pet peeve. Why was it rectangular? It was my understanding that the front of all First Comics' releases would be in the fine, aesthetically-pleasing shape of a pear.

2) The missing chocolate bar. Now, you may not know this, but ever since I was a small boy, no bigger than this, I get honked off whenever a comic book does not contain a complimentary bar of chocolate. A silly mistake of yours, I'm sure you will admit.

Before you think I'm entirely honked, however, I will list a few of the good points I found in the first issue:

1) Nova Kane's breasts.

There. Never let it be said that I don't play fair when somebody's looking.

A Fine Day To You All
Mike Bannon
2453 Martin Drive
Dubuque, Iowa

1) You must have misunderstood our advance hype. True, the cover to ***E-Man*** *#1 was a mistake: the drawing you saw was supposed to be found, in its entirety, in the non-existent lower-left-hand corner UPC box. The rest of the cover was supposed to be blank.*

2) Since we sent you a photocopy of ***E-Man*** *#1, you unfortunately missed out on the photocopy of the chocolate bar. Sorry.*

1), again. How do you really know for sure?

Hey, Mike, you had us worried for a few minutes, until we found your subscription order. You guys out in Iowa sure are a bunch of knee-slappers.

A few New Year's notes. Thanks to Marilyn Bethke and the folks over at **Amazing Heroes** for the cover story on **E-Man** – cover provided by Joe Staton, no less!

Speaking about the oft-aforementioned Mr. Staton, comics fans out in the North Carolina area will be seeing a lot of him towards the end of this month: Joe will be appearing at Heroes Aren't Hard To Find comics store, 1214 Thomas Avenue, in Charlotte on Friday, January 21st, and he'll be at the Charlotte Mini-Con the following day (Saturday, the 22nd). The Mini-Con will be held at the Eastland Mall Community Room – call 704-375-7462 for more information. Joe will be doing drawings, signing copies of **E-Man**, kicking small children and cats.

Our Mike Mist Minute Mist-ery page comes from Mike Mist's very own Max Collins and Terry Beatty, all three of whom have racked up impressive credits. Mike has appeared in newspapers all over the nation, and his adventures have been anthologized by Eclipse Enterprises. Mike recently had a slot in Mystery Magazine, and has a new series of two-minute mysteries (each two pages instead of one, get it?) in the new Ms. Tree comic book.

Max Collins, of course, is the writer of the extremely popular Dick Tracy comic strip, and has published about a dozen mystery novels, with three coming up in hardcover this year alone.

Terry Beatty is the regular cover artist for the Buyer's Guide to Comic Fandom newspaper (where he paid homage to **E-Man** last year), a frequent contributor to the underground press – he edited Kitchen Sink's Mod, for example – and to sundry other advant guarde publications. He might very well be Iowa's only punk rock bon vivant.

Together, Collins and Beatty produce Ms. Tree; originally for Eclipse and now in color from Eclipse and available wherever **E-Man** and **Warp** are sold.

NEXT MONTH: The senses-shattering conclusion to the Unhappy F-Man story, courtesy of Martin Pasko and Joe Staton, and the long-awaited return of Pudge Girl Blimp by Lee Marrs. Heart-wrenching true crime thrills with Pudge, all in one four-color page! On sale in mid-February! **WRITE** to us. It gives us an excuse to avoid endless staff meetings. That's **E-Mail, c/o First Comics, Inc., 1014 Davis Street, Evanston, IL 60201.** We're looking forward to hearing from you!

– Mike Gold

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THE BUTLER DIDN'T

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A MIKE MIST MINUTE MIST-ERY

"PLAYBOY DANVER MINT CALLED MY OFFICE AND ASKED ME TO DROP BY HIS PENTHOUSE SUITE AROUND BREAKFAST TIME – WHICH FOR HIM WAS THREE PM..."

MASTER MINT AWAITS IN THE KITCHEN, SIR –

MIKE! I'D LIKE TO ACQUIRE YOUR SERVICES AS MY BODYGUARD... DESPITE THE HABIT YOUR CLIENTS SEEM TO MAKE OF DYING ON YOU.

THAT'S A LOW BLOW, DAN –

I'VE BEEN HAVING DEATH THREATS – REMEMBER THAT LITTLE BLONDE, LAST WEEK? HER EX-BOYFRIEND IS PHIL CORLEONE.

THE GANGSTER? CUTE.

I THINK MAYBE HE'S TAKEN A CONTRACT OUT ON ME. CARE FOR A LIGHT BREAKFAST?

OKAY. WHO'S THE NEW BUTLER? HMM... BITTER ALMONDS?

SNIF

THE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY SENT HIM OVER – JEEVES TOOK SUDDENLY SICK...

DON'T EAT THAT!

THE DELICIOUS LOOKING CREAM-FILLED SNACK CAKE HAD THE FRAGRANCE OF BITTER ALMONDS, WHICH MEANS ONE THING TO A TRAINED DETECTIVE: CYANIDE! BUT I WAS MISTAKEN: THE BUTLER WAS MERELY SERVING NEW HOSTESS WINKIES WITH BITTER ALMOND-FLAVOR FILLING!

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Harvey First Issues
Casper the Friendly Ghost
Devil Kids
Hot Stuff
Richie Rich
RR and Cadbury
__ RR and Casper
__ RR and Dollar the Dog
__ RR and Glona
__ RR and his Girlfriends
__ RR and Jackie Jokers
__ RR and Reggie
__ RR Bank Books
__ RR Billions
__ RR Cash
__ RR Collectors' Comics
__ RR Diamonds
__ RR Dollars and Cents
__ RR Fortunes
__ RR Gems
__ RR Gold and Silver
__ RR Inventions
__ RR Jackpots
__ RR Millions
__ RR Money World
__ RR Profits
__ RR Riches
__ RR Success Stories
__ RR Vaults of Mystery
__ RR Zillionz
__ Sad Sack
__ Sad Sack & The Sarge

SECTION V
SPECIALTY AND DIRECT SALE PUBLISHERS

__ Captain Victory (Pacific)
__ Ms. Mystic (Pacific)
__ Pacific Presents (Pacific)
__ Rog 2000 (Pacific)
__ Starslayer (Pacific)
__ Destroyer Duck (Eclipse)
__ Nexus (Capital)
__ Sabre (Eclipse)
__ Scorpio Rose (Eclipse)
__ Star Jammer & The Peace Machine (Comely)
__ Thunder Agents (Carbonero)
__ X-Men Companion (Fantagraphics)

(see the magazine section for more specialty publishers as well!)

SECTION VI
CHARLTON COMICS

__ All Charlton First Issues
__ Attack
__ Battlefield Action
__ Billy The Kid
__ Charlton Bullseye
__ Fightin' Army
__ Fightin' Five
__ Fightin' Marines
__ Ghost Manor
__ Ghostly Haunts
__ Haunted (Baron Weirwulf)
__ Soap Opera Romances
__ War

SECTION VII: DIGESTS

__ Archie Where R U Digest
__ Archie Comics Digest
__ Best of DC Digest
__ Best of Dennis Digest (Marvel)
__ Archie Double Digest
__ Betty/Veronica Annual Digest
__ Casper Digest Stories
__ Casper Digest Winners
__ Dennis the Menace Digest (Marvel)
__ Jokebook Comics Digest
__ Jughead Jones Digest
__ Jughead/Archie Digest
__ Laugh Comics Digest
__ Little Archie Digest
__ Madhouse Comics Digest
__ Richie Rich Best of Years
__ RR Digest Stories
__ RR Digest Winners
__ RR Holiday Digest
__ RR Million Dollar Digest
__ RR Vacation Digest

SECTION VIII: MAGAZINES AND SPECIALTY ITEMS
(fanzines or strictly comics items are denoted by asterisks)

__ Adventure Illustrated*** (New Media)
__ Amazing Heroes***
__ Analog
__ Bizarre Adventures*** (Marvel)
__ Cerebus the Aardvark***
__ Cinefantastique***
__ Cinefex***
__ Cinemagic (Starlog)
__ Club
__ Club International
__ Comic Reader***
__ Comics Feature*** (New Media)
__ Comics Journal***
__ Comics Newsline***
__ Comics Scene*** (Starlog)
__ Cracked
__ Cracked Specials
__ Crazy*** (Marvel)
__ Creepy*** (Warren)
__ Eclipse Magazine***
__ Eerie*** (Warren)
__ Elfquest*** (Warp)
__ Enterprise Incidents*** (New Media)
__ Epic*** (Marvel)
__ Famous Monsters (Warren)
__ Fangoria (Starlog)
__ Fantaco Chronicles*** (Fantaco)
__ Fantastic Films
__ Fantasy & Science Fiction
__ Fantasy Illustrated*** (New Media)
__ Fantasy Modeling (Starlog)
__ First Kingdom*** (Pilot)
__ Galaxia Comics***
__ Gallery
__ Gallery Specials
__ Gates of Eden*** (Fantaco)
__ Genesis
__ Goblin*** (Warren)
__ Heavy Metal***
__ Heavy Metal Specials***
__ High Society
__ Hustler
__ Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine
__ L.O.C.*** (New Media)
__ Mad
__ Mad Specials
__ Marvel Comics Index*** (Pacific)
__ Marvel Super Special*** (Marvel)
__ Maylar
__ National Lampoon
__ Nat Lamp Specials
__ 1994 Magazine*** (Warren)
__ Omni
__ Omni Specials
__ Penthouse
__ Penthouse Specials
__ Playboy
__ Playboy Specials
__ Preview*** (Steranko)
__ Rocket's Blast*** (New Media)
__ Savage Sword of Conan*** (Marvel)
__ Spirit*** (Kitchen Sink)
__ Starlog
__ Starlog Specials
__ Swords of Cerebus***
__ Trek (Star Trek)*** (New Media)
__ Vampirella*** (Warren)
__ Weirdo*** (Kitchen Sink)

SECTION IX
TREASURIES AND POCKETBOOKS

__ All DC Treasuries
__ All Marvel Treasuries
__ All DC Pocketbooks
__ All Marvel Pocketbooks

(For information on WHITMAN comics and BRITISH publications, please write us!)